UNITED
NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3
8 April 1992

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women (CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second and third periodic reports of States parties

CUBA*

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Cuba, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.4; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.20 and CEDAW/C/SR.23, and Official Records of the General Assembly, thirty-ninth session Supplement No. 45 (A/39/45, Volume I), paras. 246-285.

V.92 53112 3234E

INDEX

I. Introduction

II. Legislative measures to implement the Convention

III. Actual progress made and changes brought about in promoting and attaining the elimination of discrimination against women. Obstacles to women's participation on an equal basis with men

IV. Matters raised by the Committee that were not not dealt with at the time of examination of the previous report

V. Statistics

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the years from 1983 to 1990, and thus forms the second and third periodic reports that Cuba is required to submit to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as stipulated in article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. Population statistics and aspects of the country's socio-economic development are set out below. These will be developed more fully in subsequent sections.

3. In 1988, Cuba, which covers an area of 110,860 km^2, had a resident population of 10,468,661 inhabitants, with a growth rate of 10.8, the projected figure for 1990 being 10,603,200 inhabitants.

4. The gender breakdown of the total population is 5,270,822 males (50.3 per cent) and 5,197,839 females (49.7 per cent), the male/female ratio being 101.4 males to every 100 females.

5. The geographical distribution of the population is such that 7,619,052 inhabitants (72.8 per cent) live in urban areas and 2,849,609 (27.2 per cent) in rural areas.

6. In all the country's provinces, there is a higher proportion of men than women in rural areas.

7. Since 1985, the main factor in population growth has been new births.

8. Life expectancy at birth, which is conditioned by adequate health care and diet among the population, has increased considerably throughout the country in the case of both sexes, the figures being higher for females (see statistical annex).

9. Over the past 13 years, the female birth rate has risen and fallen. Up until 1975, the gross rates of reproduction suggested that the population would replace itself (1.3 daughters per woman), but over the last 15 years the level has been below one daughter per woman. If this trend is maintained, the country may undergo a fall in population numbers and an increase in the average age of the population. The fertility levels are among the lowest in Latin America (see statistical annex).

Age group	1983	1988
0 - 14	27.6	23.3
15 - 64	64.3	68.1
65 and over	8.1	8.6

10. The highest concentration of the population lies in the age group from 15 to 24 years (these figures applying to both males and females):

15 to 19 years ..... 11.0 per cent
20 to 24 years ..... 11.2 per cent.

Average age of the Cuban population:

Average age	1983	1988
	31.0	32.3

11. Throughout the country's history, major changes have taken place in urban/rural location patterns among the entire population. The growth of urban areas has continued at a constant pace, as can be seen from the table "Population by zone of residence" (see statistical annex). The growth of urban areas has been due, particularly in recent years, not only to the natural increase in the population (births less deaths) but also to a process of urbanization of previously rural localities through the construction of new communities and urban-rural migratory movements. It should be pointed out that these changes have been occurring throughout the length and breadth of the country, in each of the provinces that make up the territory of Cuba.

12. It is appropriate at this stage to make a number of remarks of an economic nature to serve as a reference point for a better understanding of comments made subsequently.

13. Cuba's socio-economic situation is not typical of the countries that make up the so-called "third world". Over the last three decades there have been socio-economic changes, such as a redistribution of income to the benefit of the working classes, the eradication of unemployment and a gradual raising of the population's living standards. It can thus be asserted that the picture of poverty confronting other underdeveloped countries is not the picture confronting the Cuban people, who are the beneficiaries of the economic and social progress achieved within the country.

14. The Revolution opened up new horizons in the economic, political and social lives of Cubans and advocated equality for all human beings.

15. In Cuba, the exercise of all inalienable rights of every citizen is guaranteed.

16. All citizens are guaranteed food, at reasonable prices, and totally free education and health services.

17. Day-care institutions, which look after the children of tens of thousands of working women, have been set up. Also, facilities have been introduced to provide hundreds of thousands of children with free canteen meals, both for part-boarding pupils and for grant-assisted students.

18. The Government has devoted substantial resources to the construction of housing in both urban and rural areas. It is also in our interests to ensure recreation for the people, as is evidenced by widespread participation in cultural activities, for which purpose the necessary facilities have been increased.

19. Books to suit all tastes are on sale at very low prices; visits to museums and admission to sports activities are free of charge.

20. In short, systematic steps are being taken to set up new cultural institutions that will contribute to a better use of leisure time, not only in the provincial capitals but also in the most outlying regions of the country.

21. Despite the efforts made, it has not been possible to achieve the average rate of growth needed to eradicate underdevelopment, since ours is a country that has been affected by the world economic crisis, by the economic blockade imposed by the United States Government and, more recently, by the dismantling of the socialist system.

22. As a result of the above-mentioned factors, the domestic economy has followed a low growth trend, and in the last three months of 1990 Cuba began to experience a period of economic crisis, known as the "special peacetime period".

23. Measures of a restrictive nature have been taken and priority attention is being accorded to basic schemes to ensure that the population's essential needs are met. One such measure is the introduction of the Food Programme, which includes the implementation of sustainable rural development and agricultural schemes in order to achieve food security through increased production of rice, sugar cane, pig-meat, poultry, and root and leaf vegetables, through greater availability of exploitable water-power resources, and through more extensive fish-farming on inland waterways and in intensive fish-breeding ponds, in addition to the development of the medical and pharmaceutical industries, biotechnology and the tourist trade, i.e., activities capable of generating freely-convertible currency resources.

24. Women's participation in social production is increasing, and this has altered relationships of dependence within marriage. Women's ideas are expanding, thus making it possible to bring about changes in the way they view their lives.

25. Since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, the percentage of women in managerial positions has been gradually increasing.

26. As women progressively raised their occupational, cultural and technical training levels, they have been assuming greater prominence in taking up responsibilities of different kinds.

27. Women figure prominently in the lower echelons of all political, social and mass organizations although, in most cases, the higher the rank, the smaller their participation, principally in managerial posts and in professional grades.

28. The opposite is the case with government posts, since the proportion of women deputies to the National Assembly of People's Power is 33.4 per cent, while their share of local government posts is 16.7 per cent, which is unrepresentative in terms of women's participation in the community.

29. The discrimination that still exists in the minds of some people is manifested in the view that men are more suited because they have more

opportunity and more time to assume leading roles; in women who undervalue themselves by considering that they are limited in what they can do; and in the failure of some to acknowledge the revolutionary changes in women's status and the role that they should fulfil in society.

30. In many families, the woman alone bears the bulk of all responsibilities, including domestic chores, and the care and upbringing of the children. This is because an educative process has not been passed on from one generation to the next showing that these responsibilities are not exclusive to women and not "naturally" assigned to them. Consequently, the male contribution to discharging these responsibilities is sometimes minimal or even nil.

31. The Government and society of Cuba wish to achieve the full equality of women in all fields, and, to this end, educational efforts are also being directed at the family with a view to generating awareness that household responsibilities can be shared. However, this must not be a make-or-break approach but rather a constant endeavour to win over and convince.

32. It is true that male-dominated attitudes still persist in our society, since a mere 30 years of Revolution are not sufficient to bring about radical changes in traditions and behaviour. These are more likely to alter in parallel with economic, political and social changes.

33. Nevertheless, if we look back over the road we have travelled, we will observe that there have been many achievements on the way towards the full exercise of women's rights of equality.

34. Major progress has been made in raising the awareness levels of Cuban women, as is reflected in their active participation in society, where women have created a new image that goes beyond the mere reproductive function.

35. In Cuba, the national machinery responsible for promoting women's equality is the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), a non-governmental organization that has a broad social base, since it encompasses women in all sectors of Cuban society.

36. Although it is a non-governmental organization, it is invested with authority that enables it to act and exert influence directly at the decision-making levels of Government.

37. In Cuba, the Council of State is the supreme government body responsible for legislating and formulating policies and, within it, the Federation of Cuban Women is represented through its chairwoman, who conveys the concerns and needs of women. The body responsible for drawing up women's policies within the structure of the FMC itself is the National Committee, on which all women's sectors are represented and whose members include women holding decision-making posts in key ministries, the Party, trade-union and other social organizations.

38. The chairwoman of the FMC is also the head of the Women's, Youth and Child Welfare Commission of the National Assembly (Parliament).

39. The Federation of Cuban Women maintains close working links with governmental and non-governmental organizations that undertake programmes and

projects dealing with women's issues, such as the Central Planning Board, the Ministry of Public Health, the State Committee for Labour and Social Security, the State Committee for Statistics, the Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Internal Trade, the Cuban Radio and Television Institute, Banco Popular de Ahorro, the National Union of Writers and Artists, the Cuban Lawyers' Union, the University of Havana and its Faculty of Psychology and the Cuban Journalists' Union, as well as with women's organizations in the religious sector.

40. The FMC comprises 3,389,569 women, i.e., 83 per cent of the female population eligible for membership (minimum age requirement 14 years). Over 60 per cent of FMC members are aged between 14 and 39, an indication of the high level of young women's involvement in the organization.

Its planned objectives include:

- Introducing policies and programmes aimed at achieving the full exercise of women's rights of equality in all spheres and at all levels of society;

- Increasing the level of women's involvement in the country's economic, political and social development;

- Implementing programmes and activities to promote the advancement of women;

- Assisting in achieving greater participation by women at the decision-making level;

- Conducting research and studies to enable those problems that most affect women to be identified, with a view to seeking the necessary solutions in coordination with the bodies and institutions concerned;

- Introducing programmes aimed at generating awareness of women's specific problems within the family and in society;

- Establishing and maintaining links with women's organizations and institutions world-wide;

- Participating actively in international organizations that deal with women's issues.

41. Membership of the FMC is voluntary. However, its activities and influence reach all women through measures aimed at bringing them together, since the FMC is structured and organized from grass-roots level upwards throughout the country, thus enabling it to achieve widespread involvement, in both rural and urban areas, of female workers, students and housewives, young and adult.

42. In November 1988, a national seminar was held in Havana to evaluate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. This was funded through a project financed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

43. This seminar proved to be very important in regard to the level of group discussions that took place on what had been achieved and what still remained to be done in order to enhance women's participation, on equal terms, in the fields of health, employment, education and the media in Cuba.

44. As stated above, important recommendations and measures emerged from the seminar. These will enrich our strategies for women's progress and integration into the economic and social processes of the country. Much of the content of these discussions appears in section III of this report.

II. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

45. The Cuban Constitution of 24 February 1976 and the supplementary statutory provisions issued in connection with it have updated and enriched the Cuban legal system, which guarantees and safeguards the real and effective enjoyment of a whole series of rights, including the rights of women.

46. The fundamental law of our Republic, i.e., the Constitution of 24 February 1976, lays down in chapter V ("Equality") that all citizens shall enjoy equal rights and be subject to equal obligations, and prohibits discrimination based on race, colour, sex or national origin.

47. As regards the principle of equality between men and women, the law emphasizes that women shall enjoy equal rights with men in the economic, political, social and family spheres.

48. The Family Code (further details of which will be given) enacted on 14 February 1975 was the first legislative instrument introduced in connection with family rights after the triumph of the Revolution. The Cuban Constitution, in its chapter III ("Family"), ratifies the concepts and objectives on which the Family Code is based.

49. Law No. 16 of 28 June 1978 entitled "Children's and Young Persons' Code", which forms part of the legal system and regulates the participation of children and young people under 30 years of age in the construction of the new society, proclaims the principle of women's equality and the cooperation that must prevail in couples' relationships within marriage, in the fulfilment of their obligations in the home, and in the care and upbringing of their children.

50. Among the legislative measures adopted by the Cuban Government, after submission of its first report, with a view to ensuring compliance with the constitutional provisions prohibiting all discrimination against women, the most notable is the Penal Code (Law No. 62) of 29 December 1987, which establishes the criminal offence of infringement of the right to equal treatment.

51. Under this regulation, "any person who discriminates against another, or who abets or incites discrimination, either through offensive displays or attitudes with regard to the latter's sex, race, colour or national origin, or through action to obstruct or prevent, on these same grounds, the latter's exercise or enjoyment of equal rights as laid down in the Constitution, shall be punished". The penalty is deprivation of liberty for a term of six months to two years, or a fine of 200 to 500 times the minimum daily wage, or both.

52. The Penal Code also prohibits the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, and the perpetration of acts of violence (or incitement to perpetrate such acts) against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and lays down the same penalties.

53. Infringement of the right to equality of treatment is an offence that may be prosecuted ex officio. Consequently, the filing of a complaint is sufficient for preliminary inquiries to be initiated and for evidence in proof of the offence to be heard. Once the investigation is completed, the case is brought before the competent court by the Public Prosecutor if he considers that there are sufficient grounds for doing so.

54. As regards the courts of law, the Constitution states that their functions shall be, inter alia, to "protect life, freedom, dignity, honour, property, family relationships and all other legitimate rights and interests of the citizens", in addition to preventing "breaches of the law and anti-social behaviour, taking punitive and correctional measures against lawbreakers, and re-establishing the authority of the law in the event of any alleged infringement thereof".

55. A further aspect dealt with by the Penal Code is the matter of antisocial behaviour, which is treated as one of the elements constituting danger (article 73.1.C). Any person who habitually violates the rules of public order through acts of violence or who, through other provocative behaviour, infringes the rights of others or who, through his general conduct, breaks the rules of law and order or disturbs the peace is deemed to represent a danger on the grounds of antisocial behaviour.

56. The practice of prostitution in Cuba is classified in the Penal Code as conduct constituting an offence under the head of antisocial behaviour. Efforts are being made to educate and dissuade young and adult women having a proclivity towards such conduct, with the aim of making them aware of society's disapproval of their activities.

57. In 1986, the National Prevention and Social Welfare Commission was set up, together with the Provincial and Municipal Commissions, made up of representatives from the corresponding State bodies and political and mass organizations. These Commissions have been performing an essential role in the quest for speedy ways and means of eradicating, dealing with and preventing social indiscipline, unlawful and antisocial behaviour, and attitudes that contravene the interests of society and social norms or infringe ethical and moral principles.

58. Cuba is a party to various international instruments in this regard:

1. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others - Proclamation of 10 September 1952;

2. Protocol and Annex amending the 1904 International Annex and the 1910 International Convention - Proclamation of 11 August 1965.

59. Another subject that should be dealt with is the Department of Public Prosecution, since this was one of the topics that merited discussion at the time of submission of the first periodic report.

60. Under the Constitution, the Department of Public Prosecution is responsible, inter alia, for ensuring the strict observance of the law and other statutory provisions concerning women's rights enshrined in our fundamental law, and it may, for that purpose, institute criminal proceedings before the competent courts in cases where required.

61. The Department of Public Prosecution receives direct instructions from the Council of State. Its organs are structured vertically throughout the country; they are subordinate solely to the Department of Public Prosecution and are independent of all local bodies.

62. As regards the functions of the Department of Public Prosecution, its duties are to bring official charges in criminal proceedings in accordance with the laws; to represent the public interests in all lawsuits in which it is required to intervene under the provisions of the law; to conduct checks on State bodies, private enterprises and other premises to ensure compliance with the law, both ex officio and upon receipt of information or reports of presumed breaches of the law; and to propose to the National Assembly of People's Power or to the Council of State and, where appropriate, to the Council of Ministers, such measures as it deems necessary for the most effective observance of the socialist law.

63. In its chapter III, which deals with the family, the Constitution lays down that the State shall protect the family, maternity and matrimony. Matters relating to the family and matrimony will be discussed here, and the question of maternity will be dealt with in section III of this report.

64. Article 35 of chapter III of the Constitution states that matrimony is a union voluntarily entered into by a man and a woman who are legally free to do so, for the purpose of living together. Marriage is based on total equality of the rights and obligations of the spouses, who are required to maintain the home and see to the all-round upbringing of their children through joint efforts in a manner that is compatible with the development of both partners' activities in society.

65. Men and women of over 18 years of age are allowed to marry. However, in exceptional circumstances and on justified grounds, marriage between a female of at least 14 years of age and a male of at least 16 may take place by authorization of the natural or adoptive father and/or mother, paternal or maternal grandparents or, in their absence, the courts.

66. Public notaries and registrars are empowered to legalize the celebration of marriage.

67. In the case of a consensual union, its de jure or de facto recognition is provided for under Cuban law, on condition that it meets the requirements of singularity and stability. It will be subject to all the legal effects specific to marriage that is lawfully entered into. The rights and responsibilities of each party vis-à-vis the other and of both parties vis-à-vis their children are thus regulated in the same way.

68. Under the terms of article 24, matrimony is contracted on the basis of equal rights and obligations of both spouses. It is laid down that both partners are required to care for the family that they beget and to cooperate

with each other in the upbringing, education and guidance of their children. This article also stipulates that the running of the home shall be shared, in accordance with the means of each spouse.

69. Under Cuban legislation, the financial regime governing marriage is the system of joint estate. Upon termination of the marriage, the joint property is divided equally between the spouses or, in the event of death, among the surviving spouse and the deceased's heirs. The division is made by agreement of the parties or by court decision. In the latter case, the court may rule that certain items of jointly-owned domestic property that it deems necessary for the under-age children's upbringing be awarded to the spouse who is granted care and custody of the children.

70. Section IV, article 53, of the Family Code stipulates that divorce proceedings may be initiated by either spouse, without distinction, and that a divorce may be obtained solely by court decision.

71. Divorce is allowable by mutual agreement or if the court establishes the existence of causes rendering the marriage devoid of meaning for the spouses and the children, and consequently also for society. Under the terms of article 52 of the Family Code, these causes have to have created an objective situation where the marriage has ceased to be or can no longer continue to be the union of a man and woman within which rights can be exercised, obligations met and the aims of loyalty, consideration, respect and mutual assistance achieved in an adequate manner.

72. In pronouncing its divorce decree, the court also decides on the matter of parental authority, and, as a rule, both parents are granted such authority over their under-age children.

73. Articles 88, 89 and 90 of the Family Code deal with care and custody. In this connection, article 89 states that "if no agreement is reached by the parents, or if any such agreement is harmful to the material or moral interests of the children, the matter shall be resolved by the competent court, which, in reaching its decision, shall be guided solely by what is most beneficial for the children. Under the same conditions, arrangements shall as a general rule be made so that the children are placed in the care of the parent in whose company they were up to the time of the marital disagreement, with preference being given to the mother if the children were in the company of both parents, and provided, in all cases, that no special circumstances warrant any other solution".

74. The amount of the maintenance allowance for under-age children is to be fixed on the basis of their normal expenses, and also according to the parents' income in order to achieve proportionality in the responsibility of both parents.

75. In addition, the Family Code has undergone various amendments whose purpose has been to adapt its articles to the statutory provisions that have subsequently been enacted. One of the most important amendments relates to the articles governing parent-child relationships by blood and through adoption and wardship, its aim being to give adopted children the same legal status within their adoptive family as consanguineous children.

76. Parent-child relationships are dealt with in article 36 of the Constitution and also under title II of the Family Code, article 65 of which stipulates that all children are equal and shall accordingly enjoy equal rights and have the same obligations towards their parents, irrespective of the latter's marital status. These stipulations are also set out in detail in the Civil Status Registry Act (Law 51 of 8 July 1985). This law abolishes all classifications regarding the nature of filiation.

77. The appropriate legal formalities for the establishment and acknowledgement of paternity are laid down in title 2, section 2, of the Family Code.

78. Article 45 of the above-mentioned Civil Status Registry Act sets out the relevant regulations concerning registration.

79. Under the regulations relating to adoption, as set forth in chapter III of the Family Code and in Special Provision Two of Decree Law No. 76 of 20 January 1984 on Adoption, Children's Homes and Surrogate Families, any person wishing to adopt must be over 25 years of age, be in full enjoyment of civil and political rights, be able to meet the financial needs of the adoptive child, etc. Children may also be adopted by unmarried women or men who satisfy the above requirements.

80. Developments in the Social Security system in Cuba mean that adequate protection is guaranteed for women and their families in accordance with the rights of all citizens.

81. For example, Law No. 24 of 28 August 1974 and article 46 of the Constitution entitle widowed working women to receive a pension (up to 25 per cent of the total amount originally fixed) in addition to the wage from their own occupation.

82. This was meant to take account of the increasing participation of women in employment and their contribution to the family economy, and thereby attempt to partly offset the loss of the deceased husband's income.

83. In the case of widows under 40 years of age who are fit for work, the total pension entitlement is for a two-year period, in order that they may take up employment in that interval.

84. Widows who are over 40 years of age or are unfit for work, or who have under-age children or dependent elderly parents needing care, are granted a permanent pension paid out of Social Security funds. This right is extended to working women, who will thus, upon retirement, become entitled to receive the amount of their late husband's pension if it is higher than their own.

85. Welfare benefit provisions included in the Social Security system protect citizens in various circumstances, and also afford protection to single mothers in financial difficulties, for the care and support of their children. The benefits may be in cash or in kind or in the form of services.

86. Various aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act (Law No. 13 of 1977) deal with women, including the following:

- The authorities are required to establish and maintain suitable working conditions and the necessary facilities for women's participation in the work process;

- This law makes reference to the provisions of the Working Women's Maternity Act (Law No. 1263), and stipulates that any pregnant woman who, because of her condition, is prevented from performing her occupational duties will, subject to the findings of a medical report, be moved to a post suited to her physical capabilities and will be exempted from night-shift work during such period of her pregnancy as is laid down by regulation.

87. Cuban citizenship is acquired by birth or through naturalization (article 28 of the Constitution).

88. The following are regarded as citizens by birth: persons born within the national territory, with the exception of children of foreign nationals engaged in the service of their Government or of international organizations; persons born abroad having a Cuban mother or father who is on official mission; persons born abroad of a Cuban mother or father, subject to completion of the formalities laid down by law; persons born outside the national territory having a Cuban mother or father who has lost his or her nationality, provided that Cuban nationality is applied for in the manner laid down by law; and foreign nationals who, in recognition of outstanding merit displayed in the struggle for the liberation of Cuba, have been deemed Cuban citizens by birth (article 29).

89. Under article 30 of the Constitution, the following are considered Cuban citizens through naturalization:

(a) Foreign nationals who acquire citizenship in accordance with the provisions of the law;

(b) Persons who have served in the armed struggle against the tyrannical State overthrown on 1 January 1959, provided that they can give proof of such status in the manner statutorily laid down;

(c) Persons who have been arbitrarily deprived of their original citizenship and who obtain Cuban citizenship by express decree of the Council of State.

90. In the case of the marriage of a Cuban woman to an alien under whose national legislation a wife is obliged to acquire her husband's citizenship, a conflict of laws arises with respect to the Cuban Constitution, which embodies the principle of women's voluntarism.

91. This situation is resolved under article 18 of the Cuban Civil Code, which stipulates that the juridical rules applying in such cases must always conform to Cuban law.

92. The statutory regulations governing the rights of citizens to acquire, change or retain their nationality apply uniformly to men and to women by virtue of the provisions of the Constitution and the stipulations of Decree No. 358 of 4 February 1944, which lays down the formalities and procedures. The Constitution guarantees the equal rights of Cuban parents to pass on their citizenship by "ius sanguinis".

93. The Constitution stipulates that the citizenship of spouses and of their children is not affected by marriage or by its dissolution.

94. On the basis of this principle, the Civil Status Registry Act (Law No. 51 of 15 July 1985), which amends and supersedes various articles of the Family Code, lays down the requirements for registration of the acquisition, loss or recovery of Cuban citizenship, and the Regulatory Provisions of that law lay down the rules for its implementation.

95. Law No. 59 of 16 July 1987 (Civil Code) stipulates that full legal capacity to exercise rights and to perform legal acts is acquired at the age of majority (i.e., 18 years), or upon marriage in the case of a minor.

96. Capacity is subject to the restrictions of age and physical and mental incapacity. This means that no account whatsoever is taken of gender in the determination of a person's legal capacity.

97. The right of succession is set out in book four of the above-mentioned Law, which stipulates that inheritance shall be disposed of by last will and testament or by law, the former being known as testate succession and the latter as intestate succession.

98. One chapter of this Law is devoted to the appointment of "specially protected heirs", whom it lists as the children (or, if predeceased, their descendants), the surviving spouse and the ascendants, provided that they are unfit for work and financially dependent on the deceased.

99. In such cases, testamentary freedom is restricted to one half of the estate, and the testator may not place any lien on the portion of the estate that falls to the specially protected heirs.

100. As can be seen, this is a way of ensuring fairness if any attempt at discrimination is made at the time of the legal drafting of a will.

101. In the case of intestate succession, the order of inheritance is in the direct descending line, i.e., the children and other descendants. The estate is shared out among them in equal parts, but without prejudice to the rights of the spouse and parents, if unfit for work, or of any relatives who are financially dependent on the deceased.

102. The surviving spouse is entitled to an equal share along with the other joint heirs. Also, should there not be any parent or descendant of the deceased alive, the entire estate will pass to the spouse.

103. Regardless of whether divorce proceedings have been instituted, should the death of either spouse occur, the surviving spouse will in all cases retain his or her right of inheritance. This provision puts an end to the

former arrangement whereby the share of the inheritance falling to a surviving female spouse consisted solely of the widow's right of usufruct of the deceased's estate.

104. The provisions of the Cuban Constitution establish the right of universal and equal suffrage, by secret ballot, for all Cuban men and women over 16 years of age, and also their eligibility to stand for election provided that they are in full enjoyment of their political rights (articles 134, 135 and 136).

105. The Constitution also stipulates that all citizens shall, without distinction of race, colour or national origin, have access to any government post and public office, according to their merits and capabilities (article 42).

106. The Cuban State promotes citizens' participation in the development of its educational and cultural policies, through social and mass organizations. Social and mass organizations are accorded every facility required for the pursuit of such activities. For example, article 3.C of the Labour Code grants all workers the right to freedom of association and the right to form trade-union organizations.

107. The changes that took place in the country following the enactment of Law No. 1320 of 27 November 1976 resulted in the approval of new legislation, namely the "Associations Act" (Law No. 54 of 27 December 1985), which lays down the rules governing the registration of associations and their activities. The regulatory provisions of this Law stipulate that the following associations may be formed: social, professional, scientific or technical associations that seek, through their work, to contribute to the furtherance of research and the application of scientific and technological achievements; cultural and artistic associations that aim to promote and develop artistic education and potential for the creation and furtherance of art and culture; sporting associations whose objectives are the development and practice of sport and physical recreation and education; friendship and solidarity associations that seek to develop ties of friendship between peoples and the study of their history and culture; and other associations that pursue charitable aims, in accordance with the Cuban Constitution (article 53) and the above-mentioned Law.

108. Article 2 of this Law states that this list of associations does not include the social and mass organizations referred to in article 7 of the Constitution, ecclesiastical and religious associations, agricultural and livestock production cooperatives, loan and service cooperatives, etc.

109. Articles 5, 6 and 7 of the Act set out the requirements that intending associations have to meet in order to avoid rejection of their applications by the Ministry of Justice.

110. Article 8 is even more explicit. In addition to making reference to the above-mentioned articles, it lays down a whole series of stipulations whose non-observance would also give rise to rejection.

111. The various chapters of title XI of the Penal Code, "Offences against the normal conduct of sexual relations and against the family, children and young

persons", deal with a number of issues such as assault, pederasty with violence, sexual abuse, incest, rape of juveniles, corruption of minors, other acts contrary to the normal development of children, etc. Various criminal offences are defined and graded differently, together with their corresponding penalties, and punishments are laid down for both men and women. However, the crime of spousal assault is not treated separately. This is because the levels of violence between couples do not amount to a social phenomenon. Factors favourably influencing this situation are the educative effect of the Family Code, and formal and sex education, which includes the new concept of marriage based on love and mutual respect.

112. The Cuban judicial system does not establish any form of distinction or discrimination with regard to the selection of judicial personnel. This is evidenced by the fact that, according to the 1987 National Census of Government Administrative Personnel conducted among organizations of the Central State Administration that exceed the national average in terms of the percentage of women in managerial posts (22.8 per cent), the figure for the Ministry of Justice was 34.0 per cent, and the organization having the highest proportion of women in managerial posts within its central machinery was the National State Arbitration Board (OAEN), the figure being 42.9 per cent.

113. The total number of persons employed at the Supreme Court is 180, of whom 111 are women, i.e., 61.7 per cent. Of the professional judges, 39.3 per cent are women, including the vice-president of the Supreme Court and the president of the Criminal Court.

114. Within the Department of Public Prosecution, 431 members (49.7 per cent) of the prosecutors are women, of whom 93 (21.5 per cent) hold senior posts.

115. In Cuba, free-of-charge legal services specifically for women do not yet exist. This does not mean that a woman seeking information at no cost cannot approach any of our juridical institutions (group legal practices, notaries' offices, etc.).

116. As a result, the charges for services provided by group legal practices are reasonable by comparison with the average wage level in the country. These charges range from 60 to 100 Cuban pesos and are adjusted according to the complexity of the case. For example, the fee charged for a divorce is 60 pesos, while the charge for handling a matter as complex as a high-court appeal is just 100 pesos.

117. A country-wide project is currently being developed to train the Women's and Family Counselling Centres run by the FMC, at which it will be possible to obtain information and guidance on legal and other matters.

118. Professorships in women's affairs, which are now established at six of the country's institutes of further education and at the University of Havana, have been promoted with the aim of including women's issues as an additional subject on the curriculum, whilst at the same time fostering gender awareness among post-secondary students and the lecturing staff.

119. Various leaflets and other material have been published to provide women with information on the rights available to them. Publications during the past decade have included, for example, "Aspectos jurídicos de interés para la

mujer y la familia" ["Legal aspects relevant to women and the family"] and "La legalidad socialista y la lucha contra el delito" ["Socialist law and the fight against crime"].

120. Also, any draft laws, codes and resolutions involving the rights and obligations of Cuban women are discussed among non-governmental organizations (such as the National Association of Small-scale Farmers, the Revolution Defence Committees, and the Cuban Trade-Union Federation and its member unions) prior to being enacted.

121. In connection with the above, a mass-media campaign was organized to publicize the contents of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to mark the tenth anniversary of its adoption.

122. It should be pointed out that the provisions of the Convention have been incorporated into the various legal instruments so far referred to. Consequently, in the event of any violation, the complainant has to invoke the particular instrument that relates to the case concerned.

123. The Cuban State is ever vigilant to ensure that the law is in keeping with the reality of Cuban women's lives. One example is the recently introduced provision allowing claimants to make use of summary proceedings to obtain maintenance payments, as a means of expediting the process. This new rule was the outcome of the findings of the national census that was conducted in 1990 with a view to asertaining the situation prevailing in the country.

124. All the foregoing demonstrates the particular interest of the Cuban Government and of political and mass organizations in ensuring that the legal system reflects the economic, political and social changes that have occurred in Cuba since 1965 in areas where women's equality occupies a prominent place.

III. ACTUAL PROGRESS MADE AND CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT IN PROMOTING AND ATTAINING THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN. OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH MEN

125. In this section, an attempt will be made to provide specific information on the progress made and the obstacles still to be overcome in order to achieve the full participation of women, on equal terms with men, in three important areas: employment, health and education.

126. Mention should be made, by way of introduction, of the efforts being made in Cuba to maintain the standards of social welfare that have been achieved. These efforts are reflected in the social services provided for the population, particularly in public health and education, which over the period from 1986 to 1990 exceeded 1,400 million pesos per annum.

127. Article 44 of the Constitution lays down that "work within the socialist society is a right, a duty and an honour for every citizen" and that "in the

---

* Benefit payment: State grant received by pregnant workers as from the thirty-second or thirty-fourth week, depending on whether or not the pregnancy is multiple.

provision of employment, account shall be taken of the requirements of the economy and society, of the worker's own choice and of his or her aptitudes and skills". In Cuba, every citizen is guaranteed the right to receive equal pay for equal work (article 42 of the Constitution).

128. In the late 1960s, because of the increasing demand for women's integration into the labour force and the need to set regular targets for this integration, the Ministry of Labour issued Order No. 47 with a view to reserving for women those occupations that fulfilled a minimum set of requirements for their recruitment, particularly since women constituted a group that was to a large extent unskilled.

129. In that same year, Ministerial Order No. 48 was issued with the aim of protecting women in the performance of occupations that might pose a danger to their health or reproductive function. The passing of the years and the sharp influx of women into occupations previously barred to them by reason of their sex revealed this Ministerial Order to be both protectionist and discriminatory.

130. This prompted an in-depth analysis of these regulations since, even by the early 1970s, they were proving to be unworkable and an obstacle to further integration into the labour market. As a result of this analysis, Ministerial Order No. 40 appeared in May 1976. This continued to specify prohibitions, but to a lesser extent, and reduced the number of barred occupations.

131. Subsequently, in the Health and Safety at Work Act (under its chapter headed "Women") and also in the Labour Code, the designation "posts not recommendable for women" was introduced in order to take account of the possible harm that they might cause to their reproductive function, and the prohibition on pregnant women and women of child-bearing condition was maintained.

132. The criteria for determining these occupations are based on physical exertion, exposure to air or water pressure, depth, height, and exposure to ionizing radiation and toxic substances.

133. In Cuba, all possible efforts are being made to incorporate the advances of science and technology into the production processes, with a view to alleviating the work of men and women.

134. Over the last 30 years, the legal, administrative and social conditions necessary to facilitate women's entry into the world of work have been established. Over 1,000 day nurseries have been set up, part-boarding and grant-assisted school places have been increased, and vacation schemes and discussion clubs have been developed to assist working families in the upbringing and care of their children.

135. Also, subject to the limits of our financial resources, developments and improvements have been made in laundry facilities, markets, preprocessed products, etc., in order to alleviate household tasks. Improvements are being made in the quality of service offered by canteens at centres of employment, the benefits of which will be described in greater detail under the subsection on health.

136. As a result of action being undertaken by the country's various organizations and bodies, women's integration into the labour force is increasing, and there is an influx of women into occupations of all kinds, both traditional and non-traditional. Indeed, as a product of the population explosion of the 1960s, some one million women joined the labour force during the 1980s, for whom new sources of employment were provided by the State in the midst of the economic blockade and the restrictions then existing in the nation's economy.

137. Women account for half of the population. In 1989 they made up approximately 38 per cent of the country's labour force and their presence in all job categories is increasing, notably in the specialist category where they constitute 53.5 per cent of all employees and 33.7 per cent of managerial personnel.

138. There has even been a significant increase in female recruitment in those areas that were previously regarded as "unsuitable for women". For example, in 1988, 14.3 per cent of workers in the construction sector were women; teams of labourers made up entirely of women are successfully engaged in the construction of residential and community-service buildings; and 29.2 per cent of industrial-sector employees and 48.4 per cent of workers in the fields of science and technology are women.

139. Women's participation in the country's scientific progress is commendable. They are active in the fields of biotechnology, meningococcal vaccine, heart, kidney and other transplants, and genetics. However, they are employed not just as scientists but also as high-level administrative staff, one example being the post of head of the Cuban Academy of Sciences, which is held by a woman.

140. One beneficial measure implemented on a national scale has been the establishment of the National Commission for Women's Employment, which was set up under Ministerial Order No. 605 issued by the State Committee for Labour and Social Security. By virtue of its structure and composition, this Commission, which operates at the national, provincial and municipal levels and is chaired by the State Committee for Labour and Social Security and made up of representatives from the Cuban Trade-Union Federation and the Federation of Cuban Women, constitutes the machinery designed to ensure the continuous advancement of women's status.

141. One of the prime objectives of the Commissions for Women's Employment is to ensure that the levels that have been achieved in women's access to employment and to job skills and promotion are maintained following the introduction of the new recruitment procedure, which is based on greater flexibility in employment organizations' ability to recruit manpower directly.

142. The year of the latest census, 1981, saw an increase in the rate of entry into employment of women aged between 20 and 54 years, and a change in the breakdown of female population by age group, the rate of employment activity in the so-called marginal ages (under 20 and over 54 years) having fallen.

143. The above state of affairs is due to the following factors: the compulsory nature of primary and secondary education; the fact that families' economic needs are being met, since most adults work and incomes are

increasing in real terms; the existence of cost-free basic services, and our social security system, which guarantees retirement pensions for all citizens.

144. Women's integration into the labour force has in recent years centred primarily on the manual and specialist categories. Female manual workers have been recruited in increasing numbers into the industrial sector, both in branches where their participation levels have traditionally been high (garment-making, textiles and leather) and also in areas where this was not so (non-electrical machine construction, chemicals, food and the sugar industry). Most workers in the specialist category have entered the fields of health and primary and secondary education.

145. Female representation at policy-making level within the Government and the Party has gradually risen throughout the course of this period.

146. In Cuba, sustained efforts have been made during this period to encourage women to assume managerial posts and to perform occupations that call for greater expertise and responsibilities in all sectors of the economy. This idea has always figured among the fundamental objectives of the women's movement.

147. In 1988, women made up 12.5 per cent of the Politburo members and 18.2 per cent of the membership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, these being the supreme policy-making organs in our society. If we bear in mind that active female party membership stands at 23.9 per cent and that women's rates of participation at the provincial and municipal levels are approximately 21 per cent on the Committees and 14 per cent in the Buros, it can be seen that their presence is becoming increasingly representative.

148. In the Young Communists' Union, where active female party membership is 41 per cent, young women this year make up 37.0 per cent of the National Committee, 33 per cent of the National Buro, and 44 per cent and 31 per cent of the Provincial Committees and Buros, respectively.

149. According to the 1987 National Census of Government Administrative Personnel, the representation of women was as follows: ministers and presidents: 4.8 per cent, deputy ministers and vice-presidents: 9.4 per cent, executives: 12.6 per cent, and departmental chiefs: 25 per cent.

150. We currently have six women ambassadors and four female consular officials.

151. Owing to women's low level of participation in the municipal and provincial organs of government, efforts were begun in 1984 to heighten awareness as to the roles that women should be performing and the positions that they should occupy. The tables below show the improvements achieved by 1986, when the number of delegates elected exceeded twice the figure for 1976. However, a slight decrease can be observed in the 1989 level.

DELEGATES TO THE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES

	1976		1984		1986		1989	
	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent
Delegates	10,725	100	10,963	100	13,259	100	14,246	100
Including:								
Women	856	8.7	1,261	11.5	2,264	17.1	2,378	16.7

DELEGATES TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES

	1976		1984		1986		1989	
	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent
Delegates	1,115	100	1,377	100	1,388	100	1,413	100
Including:								
Women	192	17.2	294	21.4	426	30.8	390	27.6

152. In the provincial assemblies there are no women presidents, just one female vice-president and 10 secretaries, who account for 24.4 per cent of 45 posts.

153. If one bears in mind that women constitute 49.7 per cent of the population, 38.3 per cent of the labour force and 53.5 per cent of the skilled employment sector, it can be concluded that female participation at the senior levels of local government is still unsatisfactory.

154. The above remarks illustrate the fact that, although there is a need for assiduous efforts to heighten awareness of women's decision-making potential and capabilities, we do possess a political will and a burgeoning core of worthy women that will bring us to our prime objective, the attainment of full equality for women.

155. The interests and needs of rural women are included in the country's general development programme. However, because of their specific needs and the fact that, prior to 1959, the rural population was the most marginalized and neglected sector, measures aimed at promoting the advancement of rural women have been incorporated into the economic and social policy.

156. Under the agrarian reform, 80 per cent of the land was recovered by the State, and agricultural enterprises and agro-industrial complexes, amongst others, were set up.

157. The rest of the land is owned by the rural comunity in the following ways: as farming and livestock production cooperatives, a scheme whereby estates are set up and worked on a collective basis (a new concept of joint ownership), or as associations of peasant farmers formed to work the land under loan and service cooperatives (but each retaining individual land ownership), or as individual producers who own their own farms, which are worked by them and their families.

158. Women account for 24 per cent of the State-owned agricultural and livestock sector, 21 per cent of the membership of the farming and livestock production cooperatives, 11 per cent of the members of the loan and service cooperatives, and 13 per cent of the individual producer category.

159. The National Association of Small-scale Farmers (ANAP), an organization which represents and promotes the interests of workers in agriculture, has 26,322 female members.

160. Women also belong to other national organizations, such as the Federation of Cuban Women, the Revolution Defence Committees, etc.

161. One third of the 1,629 members of these cooperatives who are trained to the higher- or intermediate-grade specialist level are women.

162. The State directs agricultural and livestock-raising activities through two bodies, the Ministry of Sugar and the Ministry of Agriculture. These administer agro-industrial complexes for sugar production, and farming, livestock and forestry enterprises. Women are employed in all these programmes as wage-earners.

163. Measures are being implemented in order to develop additional sources of employment for women in the farming and livestock production cooperatives. Some of these measures have already yielded very favourable results, such as the 938 specialized fruit and vegetable gardens, where the workforce is predominantly female.

164. At tree nurseries under the intensive forestry programmes, women have found new sources of employment in territories where such job opportunities do not abound, such as in the mountainous regions.

165. Additional efforts are being made to train female cooperative members in tasks traditionally performed by men, such as the pruning of coffee and cacao plants, the operation of irrigation equipment, etc.

166. Also, with a view to speeding up the overall development of the mountain areas, the Turquino Plan has been devised. Under this scheme, all forces of labour are combined together to form a multisectoral and interdisciplinary collective, in which women are recognized not only as active members but also as direct beneficiaries. The Turquino Plan aims not only to achieve maximum exploitation of the land and its resources but also to build up a social infrastructure capable of curbing the exodus to the cities and towns.

167. In connection with the above point, efforts are being made to achieve increasingly greater retention of newly qualified young female specialists, since they do not always receive the support and understanding that are necessary at such a complex stage as the commencement of their working lives in an unfamiliar environment where they encounter genuine material and personal problems. Studies are currently being conducted into the reasons why female cooperative workers are moving to other sectors of employment or are giving up their jobs altogether.

168. In the case of the small-farmholding sector, i.e., the system of individual land ownership, the women of the family do not receive daily pay for the value of their work if they contribute to the labour force by performing tasks directly related to production or that assist with production. In such instances, their work is regarded as one further domestic chore in the service of the family. In actual fact, this constitutes a form of employment discrimination.

169. This is not the case with temporary work that is performed, on individually-owned farmholdings, by women who are not family members. Such work is governed by the labour regulations in force in the country.

170. The Cuban State recognizes men's and women's right to freedom of association, and rural women are not barred from this right.

171. Women are not subject to any restrictions on borrowing. Loans are granted to anyone who owns a farm, whether a man or a women, since the rules do not make any gender-based distinctions.

172. Members of cooperatives nominate a person to represent them in dealings with the banks.

173. With regard to individual producers, such farmers are entitled to receive loans from the State. In the owner's absence, the amount of the loan may be received by the spouse.

174. Neither the land nor the means of production may be offered as security for the repayment of a loan since, under the Agrarian Reform Act, they are both exempt from seizure.

175. The favourable credit terms extended to the rural sector can be seen from the low interest rates on loans for dwellings and the extension of the payment period from 15 to 20 years so that the monthly payment does not exceed 10 per cent of the family unit's income.

176. Loans granted annually to agricultural workers amount to approximately 200,000,000 pesos, of which 70 per cent is earmarked for investment and the rest for production.

177. The loan recovery rate fluctuates between 95 and 98 per cent per annum.

178. All this has made it possible for 22,781 comfortable, new dwellings to be built at the cooperatives, and for 9,000 tractors, 100 bulldozers, and thousands of lorries and other items of equipment to be supplied to them.

179. Women are beneficiaries of this credit policy, both as individual producers and as cooperative members.

180. Cuban farmers, whether individual producers or members of the cooperatives, sell their produce via the State, and this output forms part of the national economy programmes.

181. The State accordingly guarantees the necessary marketing conditions, in which no account is taken of gender, i.e., women producers sell their produce on equal terms with men.

182. Agricultural advisory services are provided to the population irrespective of sex.

183. The Cuban economy is evolving towards collective ownership. Consequently, no land grants are made.

184. Women's right to inherit land is provided for, this right having being expressly conferred on them under the Agrarian Reform Act. A woman's right of claim to the estate operates both under the work-the-land principle and also by plea of exception even if she does not actually farm the estate.

185. In 1978, the Local Miscellaneous Industrial Enterprises were set up for the purpose of manufacturing consumer goods that are not produced by the national industry, as well as articles for export and the tourist trade, as a basic revenue for the country's economy.

186. As a result of the establishment of these industries, new sources of employment are being generated at workshops and for home-based workers.

187. Ministerial Order No. 550 of 1980 regulates contractual relationships arising out of these contracts of employment, and establishes the rights and obligations of the parties.

188. Pay is based on the number of units produced and on quality of production. The workers also receive, by way of paid leave, 0.90 per cent of the total proceeds.

189. This type of employment is preferred by women and by persons with impaired earning capacity, or who are disabled or retired, or who have family restrictions that prevent them from taking on full-time employment.

190. These women are neither undervalued nor marginalized since they are involved in social activities through mass organizations, and they also form themselves into various organizations. Records are made of the duration of their contracts so that, if they subsequently take up permanent work at a centre of employment, these contracts can be taken into account when they receive their retirement pension.

191. There are a few cases of legally authorized self-employment involving persons running their own businesses. A percentage is paid by them to the State for the licences to perform these occupations. Women who engage in work of this kind do so as hairdressers, seamstresses, manicurists and handicraft workers, amongst other activities. Under the approach currently adopted, these persons are not classified as informal-sector employees.

192. An informal sector does exist in Cuba, but its extent has not been determined. It is a phenomenon that, as already stated, arises from a shortage in the supply of labour for certain services and not as a result of unemployment. Despite the minimal research carried out into this phenomenon, it has been observed that in many instances the people engaged in such activities have a permanent job and take on these other occupations, to supplement their wage, on learning of vacancies in trades where State labour is in short supply (plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc.).

193. A number of schemes exist for the purpose of increasing employment alternatives for women through exploitation of local material resources.

194. In this connection, the question of cooperation, whether bilateral or multilateral, is of vital importance to the country. Cooperation plays a fundamental role not only in the securing of funds but also in the exchange of experience, expertise, etc.

195. To date, the bulk of the experience built up by the women's organization FMC (Federation of Cuban Women) in the area of cooperation has been through assistance received from United Nations agencies: the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

196. Through these channels, the use of fibres in basketwork and furniture-making, the production of medicinal and ornamental plants, the manufacture of bees' honey and its by-products, and the development of marble-cutting, non-food marine products and other articles are being encouraged.

197. Certain objective and, to a greater extent, subjective problems still persist, impeding progress towards the full integration of women into the various branches of the economy. This fact is demonstrated by statistical data, which confirm that, in many households, responsibility for domestic chores still rests with the woman.

198. In connection with the above, the National Survey of Working Women in the Civil Service Sector was conducted in 1985 on a nationally representative sample of 17,641 working women. This survey revealed that only 9.4 per cent of husbands cook and 14.8 per cent shop.

199. According to the people interviewed in the 1988 Nationwide Study into Equality of Women's Rights carried out by the Federation of Cuban Women in the area of household duties, such activities as management of money, shopping, washing-up and cleaning are shared tasks in at least one half of marriages, and 91.3 per cent of the interviewees believe that men's involvement in such duties has increased in recent years. (This research covered a sample selection of 4,865 women and men of between 14 and 60 years from nine of the country's provinces.)

200. From the survey conducted in 1988 by the Institute of Statistical Research into the use of leisure time it emerges that, in general, women devote more time to domestic chores, particularly on rest days, since a large percentage of their time on workdays is taken up with studying and/or working. The data show the average time devoted by men and women to certain tasks as follows:

	Men		Women	
Task	Workday	Rest day	Workday	Rest day
Cooking	0.17	0.08	1.30	1.31
Shopping	0.17	1.14	0.22	0.14

Source: National Time Budget Survey, Institute of Statistical Research, State Committee for Statistics (CEE), 1990.

201. To summarize, in the matter of women's social integration there have been major achievements in the field of employment in Cuba, particularly if account is taken of the severe decline in the world economy as a result of the economic and financial crisis, from whose effects Cuba is not exempt.

202. In the area of health care, achievements have been made in many of its branches, putting us on a par with developed countries.

203. Health services in Cuba operate at three levels. Primary care encompasses family practitioners, polyclinics, rural hospitals and stomatology clinics.

204. Preventive and curative medical treatment are provided for the entire population, including in environmental health matters.

205. Secondary and tertiary health-care services support the primary-level care at the municipal, provincial and national hospitals (both general and specialist) and the research institutes that provide services at the regional level.

206. The budget in 1990 totalled 937 million pesos. Polyclinics and emergency medical units have been set up, even in the densest parts of the country, and hundreds of hospitals have been built throughout the national territory.

207. In 1988, there was one physician to every 333 inhabitants. As regards stomatology services, the ratio for that same year was 1,636 inhabitants per stomatologist.

208. It should be pointed out that medical and hospital treatment, including costs of laboratory work, vaccinations and surgery of all kinds, from the most simple to the successful transplanting of various organs, and the use of the most up-to-date techniques such as computer-aided tomography, are entirely free of charge to the public.

209. In the health programmes of the Revolution, the Ministry of Public Health has at all times received the support of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and other mass organizations. Among the major activities being pursued is the Mother and Infant Programme, which is run in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Women, Health and Development Programme.

210. Law No. 41 of 13 July 1983 is the basic statutory instrument governing health matters in Cuba.

211. Article 4, subsection (a), of this law establishes the principle of men's and women's equal rights of access to medical services, by recognizing and guaranteeing the right of the entire population to receive adequate health care and protection anywhere within the national territory.

212. Subsection (b) lays down the cost-free nature of medical treatment and health services, and State ownership health-care institutions.

213. Chapter II of this law sets out the regulations relating to preventive and curative medical attention, which is guaranteed for the entire population through the institutions of the national health system.

214. Article 15 provides for the organization of health education activities, and of pre-recruitment and follow-up medical examinations, which all workers undergo not only for the purpose of treating diseases but also as a preventive measure.

215. The existing Health and Safety at Work Act (Law No. 13 of 28 December 1987) lays down all the regulations whose purpose is to guarantee safe and adequate conditions for all workers and to prevent occupational accidents and diseases.

216. The regulatory provisions of the Public Health Act were adopted by Decree No. 139 of 4 February 1988. This decree lays down the rules supplementing the provisions of the Public Health Act. Chapter II, which deals with medical care and social welfare, sets out various regulations guaranteeing equal rights of men and women to medical care and family planning services, and women are guaranteed appropriate free-of-charge antenatal, confinement and post-natal services and adequate nutrition throughout their pregnancy and during the nursing period.

217. Cost-free medical care is guaranteed to all expectant mothers. Institutionalized births are ensured through the network of hospital centres and maternity homes, at which skilled and specialist treatment is available and better care is thus guaranteed for both mother and child. Implicit in this law is the importance of humanizing the care provided to the woman, with the introduction of the father's involvement throughout the pregnancy and birth process.

218. The Working Women's Maternity Act (Law No. 1263 of 14 January 1974) establishes protection for working women. Under article 1, it specifically provides for medical care during pregnancy, as well as for antenatal and post-natal maternity leave, and for feeding and nursing of the infant; it also grants an allowance to those women who satisfy the requirements set out in its provisions. In this connection, article 10 has been amended by Law No. 61 of 29 September 1987, in order to increase the minimum benefit payable during maternity leave from 10,000 to 20,000 pesos per week.

219. The Labour Code (Law No. 49 of 28 December 1984) provides for the granting of paid antenatal and post-natal maternity leave, as well as hospital and medical services and the free-of-charge supply of medication and food required by expectant mothers. Also, the Labour Code lays down the rules governing the protection of motherhood and the provision of maternity benefit.

220. Regardless of the nature of their employment, working women are protected by the law, which allows them a total of 18 weeks' paid leave, requiring them to take six weeks' leave of absence after the thirty-fourth week of pregnancy and the remaining 12 after giving birth (see statistical annex).

221. In the case of multiple pregnancies or late births, the period of antenatal leave is extended by a further two weeks (also paid). If the birth is premature, the period of leave is adjusted accordingly. Should the infant die, the mother is entitled to six weeks' paid leave. Antenatal leave is established not merely as a right but as an obligation.

222. One of the programmes being pursued in order to continue raising standards of health among women and children is the Perinatological Programme, perinatology being the scientific study of all aspects dealing with gestation, confinement, the puerperium and the newly born infant, encompassing the knowledge of gynaecology, obstetrics, neonatology and paediatrics, among others.

223. In addition to the general medical care and all other forms of specialist treatment available to mothers and children, there is one physician specializing in gynaecology and obstetrics for every 2,509 women of childbearing age (15-49 years), i.e., 3.8 per cent of all doctors, and one paediatrician for every 713 children from 0 to 14 years, i.e., 11 per cent of the country's doctors.

224. One experiment that has produced very good results in reducing maternal deaths and infant mortality is the establishment of maternity homes, following the suggestion of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). Under this scheme, expectant mothers who live a long way from hospital centres or do not have the necessary amenities in their own homes are taken, in the final stages of their pregnancy, to these maternity homes, where they are given the required care and attention.

225. In 1988 there were 143 maternity homes, located mainly in the interior of the country, which handled a total of 43,572 admissions (see statistical annex).

226. The proportion of deliveries taking place in health institutions reached 99.8 per cent in 1989.

227. Despite the quality of medical services, we still encounter cases of insufficient or inadequate application of appropriate care techniques for infants and expectant mothers, essentially as a result of poor psychological support for patients and their families, unjustified restrictions in information, non-involvement and lack of attendance of relatives (principally the husband) during labour, and poor psychological preparation of the expectant mother for the birth and nursing of the newborn infant, among other factors.

228. Cuba has been gradually reducing the number of maternal deaths, as can be seen from the decline in the rate from 52.6 in 1980 to 26.1 in 1988. The causes of death are toxaemia during pregnancy or the puerperium, other complications during pregnancy, confinement or the puerperium, miscarriages and haemorrhages (see statistical annex).

229. All our expectant mothers undergo rigorous, advanced-technology screening for the early diagnosis of congenital deformities. At birth, every infant in Cuba is checked for phenylcetonuria and congenital hypothyroidism. Perinatological services have been developed throughout the country to provide specialized care during pregnancy, confinement and the puerperium, including neonatological services, intensive child-care facilities, and the national network of infant cardiac centres, all within a highly humane system of hospital attention.

230. During 1989, 184,538 babies were born in Cuba, the vast majority to mothers aged between 20 and 29 years. A further high proportion of these births was to very young mothers (between 15 and 19 years).

231. The number of deaths occurring among infants of less than one year was 2,049, representing a rate of 11.1 per thousand live births. This is an unprecedented figure in the history of Cuba. The main causes of death are, in descending order, perinatal infections, congenital abnormalities, influenza and pneumonia, enteritis, other diarrhoetic disorders and accidents.

232. As regards mortality among children under five years of age, we have succeeded in reducing the rate from 18.1 in 1986 to 14.4 in 1989. Most of the deaths are caused by accidents.

233. The health-care structure and infrastructure in Cuba guarantees general attention in rural and urban areas, and the results naturally reflect these efforts. Behavioural patterns in the main health indicators, such as infant mortality, are closely monitored and casuistically checked by the country's highest policy-making organs.

234. By way of example, the national infant mortality rate is 11.1 per thousand births, and there are provinces situated in mountainous and dense parts of the country where the rates are 11.6, 11.9, 11.8, etc., i.e. levels that exceed the national average by less than one per thousand.

235. Cuba is one of the few countries in the world where the agreements stemming from the Bucharest (1974) and Mexico City (1984) Population Conferences and of the World Conferences on Women (Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980 and Nairobi 1985) are being implemented, and where deciding the appropriate number and spacing of one's children has been proclaimed a fundamental human right.

236. Our State is acting in line with the public view on family planning, and the Ministry of Public Health is responsible for implementing the National Programme in coordination and cooperation with the National Centre for Sex Education and the Cuban Society for Family Development.

237. The blockade imposed by the United States of America is still to a large extent obstructing the acquisition of products manufactured or patented by that country. We currently have various types of intra-uterine device (IUD) and oral contraceptive agents, although we have not yet reached our targets in terms of quality and accessibility. IUDs are fitted free of charge, and other contraceptive products are sold at moderate prices with State subsidies.

238. The need for contraceptives is not being met. IUDs are available in large quantities but condoms and hormone preparations are in short supply.

239. Within the sphere of application of the National Family Planning Programme, attention also needs to be given to the matter of abortion.

240. Prior to the triumph of the Revolution, there was no tradition of abortion in the country. Abortions were illegal and yet were the main way of dealing with the problem of unwanted pregnancies. Among certain minority groups of the population, abortions were performed at clinics or surgeries with a certain degree of expertise, the middle classes used the services of abortionists who offered a minimum level of technical skills, and the poorer classes, who formed the majority, ran the almost certain risk of complications from abortions carried out in the worst of conditions by personnel with no formal training.

241. In response to concerns expressed by the Federation of Cuban Women and as a measure aimed at reducing the high levels of maternal mortality due to abortions, the foundations were laid in 1965 for the institutionalization of abortion services for those women who were unable or did not know how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Abortion facilities are freely available to women up to the tenth week, at no charge, and at the woman's own request.

242. Abortion policy is based on the principle of family planning, which respects the sovereign will of the people, and also on the premise that, until such time as a completely safe and harmless form of contraception exists, women cannot be denied the right to interrupt a pregnancy should circumstances so require.

243. A widespread publicity campaign is in operation, and attention must continue to be drawn to the fact that abortion is a surgical operation entailing risks to a woman's life, since the cases of abortions that could have been avoided through effective and responsible use of contraceptives are all too frequent.

244. As regards sterilization, our services include this option, for both men and women, and the operation is performed using high-level techniques. (Whenever sterilization is undertaken, the woman's age and the number of her children are taken into account.)

245. Because of deeply-rooted traditions, women are resorting to sterilization with greater frequency. Therefore, the advocation of vasectomies as an alternative offering advantages to couples in planning their families needs to be continued.

246. Before the Revolution, the level of women's active participation in the health sector was very low, the posts occupied by them being primarily in hospital cleaning services and nursing.

247. Since that time, there has been a substantial change in their involvement in this sector, and we today have thousands of female professional employees, representing 70 per cent of the total workforce. Women make up 87.5 per cent of nursing staff. The proportion of women studying medicine is increasing yearly, and already by 1988 women accounted for 47.7 per cent of the country's physicians and 68.8 per cent of its stomatologists.

248. Noteworthy are the very high percentage of female staff now in the specialist category (87 per cent) and their gradual rise within the managerial category, one example being the fact that they hold 47 per cent of the director posts at polyclinics, an indication of the changes in the way women are perceived and of their increasing status and the recognition of their work by the population.

249. Nevertheless, their representation among the nationally subordinate units is only 36 per cent, and within the central organization it is 22 per cent.

250. In 1984 the "family doctor" scheme was set up, the aim of this novel programme being the systematic, efficient provision of the fundamentals of health education and primary care to all family units.

251. In 1990, the total number of professional personnel engaged in the scheme was 11,915, including 7,268 women (i.e., 61 per cent). These doctors live in the communities that they serve. Their main duties include health promotion, prevention, early diagnosis, timely treatment and rehabilitation, as well as the Mother and Child Action Programme and the Elderly Care Programme, in close contact with the community.

252. The family doctors have the opportunity to become involved with and directly influence the public. We must therefore exploit this fact and the prestige that they are acquiring daily and turn them to good account in the efforts aimed at providing information and guidance on all aspects of sex education.

253. One outstanding example of women's participation and cooperation in health programmes is the very important work undertaken by the health auxiliaries ["brigadistas sanitarias"] of the Federation of Cuban Women. In particular, these women, who number more than 60,000, provide efficient health care for families, including those living in remote areas. Indeed, together with the family doctors and physicians at the polyclinics, they assist in the care of expectant mothers and newly-born infants, in the detection of cancer of the breast, cervix and womb, in hygiene and environmental matters, and in sex education, in addition to large-scale operations under the Mother and Child Action Programme and the anti-cancer programme.

254. These health auxiliaries offer their services on a voluntary basis, with the result that they are characterized by their vocation for health work. Their efforts are directed essentially at making the community where they live healthy. They are systematically trained under an agreement concluded more than three decades ago by the Federation of Cuban Women, the Ministry of Public Health and the Cuban Red Cross.

255. In Cuba, breast cancer is the form of malignant tumour most frequently detected in women. It ranks as the chief cause of female deaths from cancer, the mortality rate being 16.1 per 100,000 women.

256. Each year, approximately 1,787 new cases of breast cancer are reported by women, and some 759 of those suffering from the disease die.

257. In our country, despite the advances made in public health, breast cancer victims report their condition when it is at a very advanced stage. With a view to the introduction of a subprogramme to monitor breast cancer in Cuba, research into the early treatment of cancer was carried out by the Institute of Oncology during the period from 1980 to 1985. Consultation units that were readily accessible to the public were set up within the mastology service for mammary pathology classification purposes.

258. On the basis of the findings of this research, a series of community interaction studies was planned over the five-year period from 1985 to 1990.

259. The national subprogramme for women at risk of contracting breast cancer is equipped with mammography and ultrasound machines, automatic developers and negatoscopes, as well as with mammography film.

260. As a preventive measure, women are being instructed, through the family doctors and health auxiliaries, to examine their own breasts at least once a month.

261. In the three-year period from 1964 to 1966, cancer of the cervix and womb ranked second among malignant tumours in women. In 1966, it was decided to make a study and investigation of one group of women in the capital. This was then gradually extended to the entire country. A programme for the early detection of cervical and uterine cancer was set up using the Papanicolau method, which is based on sample-taking among large groups of the female population by means of vaginal smear tests.

262. In late 1983, a national workshop was organized. Those taking part were all persons in any way involved in the work of this programme. At the workshop, new and better ways of carrying out the operation were analysed, one of which was to raise the age for performing the first smear test from 15 to 30 years for those women who had already had coitus at some time.

263. The number of women examined in 1989 was 907,921. The coverage of the programme is around 65 per cent of the female population aged over 20 years. The number of cases detected this year was 1,070, 98.07 per cent of which were diagnosed at stages at which a high treatment success rate could be guaranteed.

264. At the present time, the new epidemiological factors connected with the appearance of this form of cancer and the latest views on the practical application of the programme are being analysed. New guidelines have been drawn up to take account of the principal recommendations made by the Pan American Health Organization as regards monitoring of the programme, including the widening of its coverage. The gradual implementation of these new guidelines will commence in January 1991.

265. However, despite the role played by the FMC in mobilizing women for the purpose of smear testing, the targets at which we are aiming are still not being achieved, and occasionally the service is deficient.

266. It should be pointed out that a major contribution to the specific work of health education is made by the mass media.

267. Publications by the women's movement, such as "Mujeres" ["Women"] and subsequently "Muchachas" ["Girls"], have throughout this period provided an important educational aid in the area of female and family health.

268. In 1983, the Cuban health authorities introduced a series of specific measures aimed at preventing the onset and spread of AIDS in the country. These measures were increased and intensified in early 1986, when the Cuban AIDS Prevention and Control Programme was launched. Under this programme, all blood received from donors is analysed, and expectant mothers are examined during the first three months of their pregnancy.

269. By 1990, 8,300,766 tests had been carried out, meaning that approximately 70 per cent of the urban population aged over 15 years had been subjected to analysis. In this survey, priority attention was focused on groups most at risk, individuals whose sexual conduct increases the likelihood of their coming into contact with the virus, and other groups who might be exposed to the risk of infection by reason of their employment.

270. As a result of these investigations, 447 positive serum cases were detected (323 in men and 124 in women).

271. Cuba's national health system guarantees comprehensive treatment for positive serum patients, including medical and psychological care and social assistance for their families.

272. Clinics exist in five of the country's provinces to deal with such cases. These services are available to everyone on an equal basis, with no distinctions of any kind.

273. Numerous activities have been organized, such as talks, exhibitions, leaflet and pamphlet distribution, and educational campaigns, aimed chiefly at young persons and adolescents. However, the changes being sought in public attitudes and behaviour have still not been achieved, and we must therefore intensify the quest for new forms of health education.

274. In the course of analysis of our first periodic report to CEDAW, information was requested on the system of "collective feeding". Details of this are given below.

275. The introduction of food grants provided by the State in the form of family cards or vouchers for use at local markets, with nationwide coverage encompassing the entire Cuban population, constitutes one of the factors that are contributing towards ensuring an adequate diet and eradicating malnutrition in Cuba. The foodstuffs covered by this scheme are milk, beef, poultry, beans, rice, oil and fat, wheat cakes, tinned tomatoes and other canned foods such as fruit and vegetable purée for babies, etc.

276. In addition to this arrangement involving the sale and distribution of food to the population, a subsidized feeding programme has been implemented in the country through the establishment of canteens for pre-school children and for pupils on a free-of-charge basis, and of workers' canteens operating at a minimal charge or even at no charge for some sectors.

277. The subsidized feeding programme comprises 15,000 individual centres, at which a total of 690,000 people eat a midday and/or evening meal outside their own homes, without this affecting their statutory allowance entitlement. It is estimated that 4,000,000 portions are produced daily at these canteens under the subsidized feeding scheme, and that close on 3,000,000 people benefit from these meals, since grant-assisted pupils boarding from Mondays to Fridays eat there both at midday and in the evening.

278. Chemical and biological pollutant control is effected by means of systematic, daily sample-taking carried out on the food eaten by the public, focusing primarily on foodstuffs with a high epidemiological risk. Food samples are conveyed to the various laboratories for toxicological and microbiological examination. Also, evaluations are made of the nutritional value of those foods that are most dispensed.

279. Dietary inspection of the subsidized feeding programme is undertaken by nutritionists working under the guidance and supervision of physicians specializing in food hygiene and nutrition. It is carried out by means of individual appraisals of the food directly consumed, using techniques for weighing or measuring the size of portions served.

280. The energy value and the protein, vitamin and mineral content are calculated from tables showing the nutritional composition of foods. The findings are compared with the quantities recommended physiologically and suited to individual characteristics.

281. The final topic in this section III deals with education and the progress achieved by women in this area.

282. As was pointed out in the previous report, the literacy campaign was a landmark in the educational revolution. Cuban women participated to a very significant extent in this campaign, accounting for 59 per cent of the literacy trainers and 55 per cent of the trainees.

283. A follow-up scheme was subsequently initiated and, in 1962, the Adult Education Subprogramme was introduced. This has made it possible to continue raising educational standards among the adult population up to the present day.

284. The five-year periods 1975-1980 and 1980-1985, with their campaigns to achieve sixth- and ninth-grade standard, were decisive in adult educational progress in the country.

285. In 1989, the country's illiteracy rate was less than 3.9 per cent.

286. A total of 42,504 housewives attend Manual and Rural Sector Education (EOC) courses, which extend up to pre-university level.

287. The efforts expended by the Federation of Cuban Women in achieving the enrolment of thousands of housewives in adult classes and their graduation at these levels were accorded due recognition by UNESCO, which in 1981 awarded the Federation of Cuban Women the "N. Krupskaya" prize.

288. Article 50 of the Cuban Constitution sanctions the right of all Cubans to education. This is guaranteed in practical terms by the State, which provides the people with opportunities for study according to their aptitudes, the needs of society and the requirements of socio-economic development.

289. The Cuban State allocates substantial resources to education, as is evidenced by the fact that, whereas in 1958 the budget was 79,400,000 pesos without allowing for indiscriminate appropriation by corrupt leaders, in 1990 it was 1,619,000,000 pesos.

290. We must point out that education, including university education, is free, and that children are provided with free books up to pre-university level.

291. The principle of equality of opportunity in education for both men and women is a reality in Cuba.

292. Female attendance in secondary-school classes is tangible proof of this principle, the graduation figures for the 1988-89 academic year being as follows:

1988-1989 ACADEMIC YEAR

Indicators	Absolute figures	Including women	Per cent
Intermediate	317 598	165 501	52.1
Basic secondary	159 857	80 714	50.5
Pre-university	60 191	37 478	62.3
Specialist and professional	89 064	40 563	45.5
Intermediate specialist	53 126	39 390	74.1
Skilled manual	7 312	1 173	16.0

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1989 (in course of preparation).

293. Further substantial evidence of progress in this area is provided by the statistics on women graduates in higher education, which are as follows:

WOMEN GRADUATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION (BY DISCIPLINE, 1988-1989)

Total:	55 per cent
Scientific/technical disciplines	48.9
Technical sciences	36.5
Natural sciences	69.8
Medical sciences	59.2
Agricultural sciences	44.4
Teacher training	63.0
Agronomy	60.6
Social sciences	68.8
Physical education	22.8
Art	41.8

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Report, October 1989.

294. According to the report published by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1989, women hold 14 per cent of executive posts at minister level (central office, rector, vice-rector and dean) and 28 per cent of posts at rector level (vice-dean, head of teaching department, second in teaching department). Women account for 45 per cent of the total staff body; 28 per cent of professors, 38 per cent of assistant professors, 48 per cent of lecturers and 50 per cent of instructors are women. Women make up 46 per cent of the research staff.

295. The diversification of specialisms within the fields of science and technology has contributed towards the creation of various categories of employment in which women are active, this being a natural consequence of the equal opportunities afforded by free education and the right to work, and also by the politico-ideological action being undertaken with the aim of integrating women into non-traditional specialized fields.

296. As stated earlier, owing to the high percentage of women within the labour force, efforts have been necessary on the part of our society to create the conditions allowing workers' families to fulfil their ever-increasing household responsibilities and duties.

297. It is for this reason that the day-nursery programme, a splendid achievement of this post-Revolution period, is one of the activities that have received priority attention, particularly in recent years. We today have 1,101 day nurseries, which look after more than 140,000 infants and at which the teaching staff and all other assistant workers are duly trained.

298. The system of student grants introduced by our country has helped to guarantee access by women to centres of learning in any of the specialisms offered under this scheme.

299. The grant system provides board and lodgings, medical care and a living allowance paid by the Cuban State, which means that young people's participation in it carries no distinctions as to gender or place of residence. As can be seen from the tables below, the number of student boarders has risen significantly over the years, which is proof of the unquestionable assistance that these grants offer to working families.

BOARDERS AND PART-BOARDERS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
(in thousands)

1985-1986
Enrolment

Level	Total	Semi-borders	Per cent	Borders	Per cent
Total	2 342.7	398.1	17.0	522.0	22.3
Pre-school	108.9	21.3	19.6	-	-
Primary	1 007.2	315.7	29.3	33.4	3.1
Secondary	1 156.6	61.1	5.3	488.6	42.2

1988-1989
Enrolment

Level	Total	Semi-borders	Per cent	Borders	Per cent
Total	2 170.6	418.8	19.3	520.7	24.0
Pre-school	143.7	34.7	24.1	-	-
Primary	899.9	316.9	35.2	24.7	2.7
Secondary	1 127.0	67.2	6.0	496.0	44.0

Note: Pupils at day nurseries are not included.

Source: Start-of-year bulletin, 1985-1986 and 1988-1989, Ministry of Education.

300. Under this grant scheme, through a combination of study and work, boys and girls are organized in mixed teams and share all kinds of agricultural tasks, cleaning work and other services.

301. In addition, job skill schools ["escuelas de oficios"] have been set up to ensure that young people who have dropped out of school at any time can

redress their educational situation and learn a trade to enable them to enter the world of work.

302. Progress has also been achieved in integrating women into the industrial sector, in fields that were traditionally the preserve of men, such as the sugar industry, non-electrical machine construction, chemicals, the food industry and the building trade. However, efforts need to be continued in directing women towards these fields, with emphasis being placed on the following actions, amongst others:

- Within the system of general education, technical subjects are included on the curriculum;

- The vocational training and guidance programme includes:

  - Discussion clubs;

  - Talks, lectures and debates at centres of secondary education;

  - The "open door" method, which operates at universities to provide young people with an opportunity to learn about and familiarize themselves with the various specialisms;

  - Programmed visits to centres of production and scientific research;

  - Circulation of the book entitled "¿Qué voy a estudiar?" [What shall I study?] aimed at secondary-school pupils, and of press articles on a variety of specialized fields.

303. Although it is true that we do not intend to set a target of 50 per cent for the various university courses, we are alert to the figures, since technical courses were for a long time regarded as not "suitable for women", and we need to establish firmly the view that a woman must not feel restricted or be barred from the course of study that she has chosen as her vocation or because she believes it to be important to the country's economic or scientific development.

304. As a result of deeply-rooted attitudes, preferences are still being shown for particular specialisms, even though the Vocational Training and Guidance Programme does not make any distinctions between men and women.

305. At times, not only have such prejudices been expressed in connection with female graduates' places of work, but they have also been observed in the assessment made by a number of organizations of women's ability to do certain jobs when deciding on their admission to courses in some specialized subjects.

306. For this reason, opportunities for access to certain branches of study have been monitored by a systematic analysis among organizers or operators of these courses. During the last decade, this work was carried out by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Federation of Cuban Women. As a result of these efforts, there are at the present time no gender-based restrictions to enrolment for any specialized secondary-level or university-level courses.

307. The school retention rate was 98.7 per cent in the 1990-1991 academic year, both in the provinces and nationwide. In the secondary schools, it was 93.9 per cent.

308. School attendance in the age range from 6 to 14 years (i.e., from the first to the ninth grades) remained at 98 per cent in the 1990-1991 academic year. For that same year, it was 68 per cent in the 15- to 17-year-old age group. As these figures show, it is precisely at these ages that the highest drop-out rate is to be found. Although the relevant statistics are not broken down by sex, we can infer that, among all the students who abandoned their education in the 1989-1990 academic year (24.7 per cent of total student numbers), the proportion of women was high. This is because marriage is a major cause of student drop-out and, as stated earlier, stereotyped roles still have a major influence on family lifestyles.

309. Albeit to a lesser extent, family problems also contribute to female drop-out numbers, again as a result of traditional patterns that dictate that it is the woman who has to deal with such situations.

310. In rural areas, particularly the mountainous regions, the causal link between female drop-out and marriage and amorous relationships is becoming increasingly pronounced since, although the differences that existed between town and country have been diminishing, families are still backward in their attitudes.

311. As already stated, despite the progress achieved in lowering the female student drop-out rate, we cannot be satisfied, and a greater interchange of experiences between the Ministry of Education and the various mass organizations, student bodies, the community, etc. is called for in order to attain this goal.

312. In Cuba, one of the aims of the educational policy has been permanent education for the population. For young and adult women who for different reasons have abandoned their studies before graduating, an Adult Education Subprogramme has been set up. This scheme, which reaches even the densest and the most sparsely inhabited areas, comprises the following levels of instruction:

- Elementary or primary (Basic-level, Manual and Rural Sector Education) in four study sessions or semesters.

  At this level some 3,500 women are enrolled and an average of 1,000 graduate each semester.

- Basic secondary (Secondary-Level Manual and Rural Sector Education) in four study sessions or semesters. Some 7,200 are enrolled and 1,500 graduate each semester.

  Advanced secondary or pre-university (Faculty-Level Manual and Rural Sector Education) in six study sessions or semesters.

  Around 28,000 women, mostly young housewives, enrol each semester and approximately 1,500 women graduate each semester.

- Language courses. These courses provide women with the standard of proficiency needed for them to enter the world of work.

  They are offered 5 per cent of the enrolment places at Specialist and Occupational Training centres. Here, female students reach the secondary or skilled manual level.

- Open University courses. Young and adult women who have passed the advanced secondary level may embark on a university course of study by this method.

313. Special education is provided throughout the country and includes the teaching of children and young people with physical disabilities (blindness, total or partial deafness and other handicaps). Over 30 per cent of pupils are female.

314. Children prevented from attending school on account of physical problems or because of long periods of hospitalization are given classes at home or in hospital.

315. These schools possess not only advanced-level graduate teachers who have been trained in special education, but also speech therapists, educational psychologists, psychometricians, and experts in injuries, orthopaedics, physical deformities and mental disorders, among other fields.

316. As part of the continuous improvements being made to the National Education System, it was felt necessary to include a variety of topics dealing with sex education. These have been introduced, from the earliest grades, into the biological and socio-ethical aspects of the study of nature and the human body.

317. In 1977, the National Working Group on Sex Education (now called the National Working Centre for Sex Education) was established as an institution attached to the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of People's Power on Childhood, Youth, Equality and Women's Rights.

318. This group comprises representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Young Communists' Union (UJC) and the Federation of Cuban Woman (FMC). It also maintains close working links with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education. The group has carried out creditable work, which has significantly contributed to the progress achieved in this area.

319. In addition, the FMC, the Cuban Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education have drawn up guidelines for an in-depth study of the family, with the aim of gathering further data in order to implement a work programme that will contribute to the strengthening of the family as a basic institution of our society.

320. The first steps have recently been taken in setting up the Family Study Group, which will be headed by the FMC and be made up of representatives of the Social Studies Centre of the UJC, the National Group on Sex Education, the Commission for Social Welfare and Prevention, the Cuban Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Justice, the University of Havana, the Faculty of Psychology and the Ministry of Education. Our objectives are first and foremost to make an overall analysis of all the research that has so far been carried out in our country into the family; and secondly to analyse each of the conclusions reached and recommendations made, with a view to enhancing and shaping the practical application of all economic, social, legal, educational, teaching, cultural and other measures that will promote the advancement of the Cuban family.

321. A joint action between the Federation of Cuban Women and the Ministry of Education has been in operation since the time when the women's organization was formed. This seeks to forge the closest possible links between schools on the one hand and the family and the community on the other. Efforts are currently being directed at helping to raise standards of education.

322. Relationships between the grass-roots organizations of the FMC and the schools are being strenghthened, and the work of FMC representatives on school boards and the Mothers for Education Movement is being monitored.

323. Among the alternative forms of parent education being offered, discussions are in progress on psychological teaching materials that deal with various family issues and their educative function.

324. In this commentary on the topic of the family, it should be pointed out that, following the proclamation of 1994 as the "International Year of the Family", an organizing committee comprising governmental and non-governmental organizations, was set up in Cuba to coordinate activities.

325. The image of women in general, and of Cuban women in particular, as projected by textbooks in our country's schools, is consistent with the policy guidelines on women that are contained in the documents produced by the Cuban Communist Party Congresses and by the Federation of Cuban Women, since women are portrayed in educational material as leading figures engaged in paid or voluntary, artistic or scientific work in the defence and exercise of rights of social equality in general. This achievement is the result of previous revisions carried out by the organizations concerned and by the Federation of Cuban Women.

326. Studies on women are part of the country's scientific policy. Research is conducted by all those organizations that deal with women's issues, with a view to assessing the level of progress in attitudes and practices relating to equality, one notable contributor to this effort being the Federation of Cuban Women.

327. Making every family member aware of the need to share household tasks is a priority aim of our work, since the principle underlying our efforts is that full equality can be attained only when it covers the area of the family and when a father's caring for his sick child so that his wife can go to work is seen as a natural and everyday occurrence.

328. These achievements are not just the realization of a desire. They are the product of unstinting work on the part of organizations and institutions within the country. For centuries, outmoded views have persisted, and cases still exist today where women themselves bring up theirs sons and daughters differently in the matter of household duties.

IV. MATTERS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE THAT WERE NOT DEALT WITH AT THE TIME OF EXAMINATION OF THE PREVIOUS REPORT

- Grant system and percentage of women benefiting.

- Whether the provisions of the Convention can be invoked in Cuban courts and whether the courts apply them directly.

- Type of work preferred by women and opportunities actually available.

- Incidence of divorce and the rules governing family property, children etc. in the event of separation.

- Number of men and women in the urban population.

- Role and structure of the Department of Public Prosecution of the Republic.

- Sanctions provided in cases of discrimination. Whether prostitution is considered an offence.

- Number of women in the judicial system.

- Participation of women at mangerial level.

- Attitude towards freedom in artistic creation and forms of artistic expression, provided that the content is not opposed to the Revolution.

- Policy of fair distribution of food to the public, especially the most vulnerable groups.

329. In this section we shall address those aspects which, we believe, need greater clarification or information and which were not covered in earlier chapters of this report.

1. Raising the educational level of the population as a whole is one of the basic objectives of the State. There are thus many training opportunities for housewives and working women.

   In the workplace, training and retraining courses are provided so that people can work better and achieve promotion to more complex and higher professional level posts.

   One of the basic objectives of women's training programmes is to integrate them in courses which make it easier for them to enter what is called non-traditional employment.

   We also have a wide variety of courses for workers in the Special Adult Education Scheme at all levels of education. In the 1988-1989 course, the percentage of women admitted to adult education for each level, was as follows:

Primary	55.3 per cent
Secondary	55.0 per cent
Pre-university	60.0 per cent
Language school	46.4 per cent
University level	56.6 per cent

2. Very much linked to the previous point is the matter of free choice by women of the employment which most suits their needs and/or interests.

   In our legislation there is no discrimination concerning employment which may be undertaken by women, except for "non-recommendable posts" for pregnant or potentially pregnant women. Hence if a women does not fall into any of these categories and is physically and mentally fit to do the work, she will be selected on equal terms with men.

UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN CUBA

Periods	1953	1958	1960	1962	1970	1981
Unemployment as percentage of economically active population	8.4	12.5	11.8	9.0	1.3	3.4

Source: CEDEM: Population in Cuba, Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1970.

The above table is convincing evidence of the decline in unemployment levels in the country where women play a leading role. Nevertheless, the following table shows that although women have been integrated into the workforce, there remains much to do as far as the difference in the average wage received by men and women is concerned.

AVERAGE WAGE RECEIVED (pesos) 1989

	Total	Men	Women	Difference	Per cent
17 to 29 years	157.20	163.01	149.77	13.24	8
TOTAL	192.80	210.15	165.06	45.09	21

Source: Survey of employed labour force (December 1989).

As shown above, in 1989 the average wage for men was higher than for women. In this connection, it should be mentioned that despite the increase in the number of women in non-traditional sectors, the wage differential is largely due to the low number of women in those sectors of the economy with the highest average wage.

In this respect, reference is made to the study "Women in non-traditional employment: case study in a Havana brickworks", which noted that women workers received an average monthly wage lower than men. The wage differential was 75 pesos 13 centavos. It is not a matter of paying men more than women for equal work, but the jobs traditionally done by women are more poorly paid than those traditionally done by men (University of Havana, 1990).

According to calculations by the State Committee for Statistics, in 1986 more than 60 per cent of the total number of women employed in the country were concentrated in sectors with average wages lower than the national average wage.

3. One of the most interesting factors related to food.

As we explained above, in Cuba consumption has specific features determined by the level of social and economic development attained. This concept of consumption is intended to combine social and individual interests and needs.

There are three types of basket in the country: basic, average and rational. The objective is to achieve a fairer distributuion of social wealth, and to avoid hunger and malnutrition.

The basic food basket falls within the context of the basic minimum consumption required for survival. The average basket results from the need to draw up patterns of consumption and to forecast demand. The national rational basket is an element in rational consumption models taking account of nutritional needs, demand and the economic capacities of the country.

MONTHLY PER CAPITA QUOTA (1989)

Product	Personal quota	Period	Price	Total cost
Rice	2.3 kg	monthly	0.52	1.20
Bread	0.23 kg	daily	0.33	2.28
Beans	0.58 kg	monthly	0.65	0.38
Meat	0.345 kg	every 9 days	1.52	2.07
Tinned Milk	3 tins	monthly	0.32	0.92
Oil and fat	0.6 kg	monthly	0.76	0.53
Sugar	1.84 kg	monthly	0.24	0.44
Eggs	5 eggs	weekly	0.10	0.50
Cows' milk (0-7 years)	1 litre	daily	0.25	7.50
Fish	0.5 kg	21 days	0.55	0.55

These products are subsidized by the State and there is an obligation to maintain the frequency and time of delivery as far as our economic capacities permit.

People with certain illnesses receive a supplementary diet, as do pregnant women. In addition, fruit and vegetables can be obtained as part of the basic basket depending on the season and through the non-rationed marketing scheme.

4. In Cuba there is an informal sector, although, as we pointed out, it has not been quantified.

The majority of those involved in such activity are women (more than 60 per cent), who cannot be integrated into a work regime of eight hours. The articles made are sold through the country's marketing network, in collaboration with those industries. The pay is based on units produced, depending on the quality of the work. Such women workers receive, in addition to their wage, 9.09 per cent of the total earned, representing paid leave. Some 40,000 women are currently engaged in such work.

5. As explained in the introduction, we have at non-governmental level the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), with a membership of more than three million. The President of the FMC is a member of the Council of State and in that capacity she presides over the Permanent Commission for Child Welfare and Equal Rights for Women, a commission of the National Assembly of People's Power (Parliament). Its basic function is to maintain continuity in the work of the National Assembly from one session to the next in relation to equal rights for women.

   In addition to its functions of inspection, issue of reports and performance of studies, this Commission is empowered to exercise legislative initiatives in relation to women, and is involved in the presentation of proposals for and drafts of new laws, as well as the amendment and repeal of laws in force.

   In order to fulfil its functions, the Commission maintains close working relations with various organizations and institutions throughout the country.

6. Since the subject of vulnerable women was one of the priority themes of the 35th session of the Commission on the Legal and Social Position of Women, there follows a brief outline of the treatment of such women in Cuba.

   In Cuba there has been little study so far of the specific problems of disabled women, so we have scant systematic information, although in general terms it is a priority concern of the Government.

   The policy adopted in this area is intended primarily to reduce the risks of disability, especially associated with age, maternity and accidents.

   The preventive programme of action includes the plan for early detection of congenital deformities in pregnant women and tests on new-born children to detect abnormalities.

   In accordance with the World Programme of Action for the Disabled, rehabilitation and treatment activities are being carried out, in order to integrate disabled persons fully into social life. These activities are included in the National Scheme for Care of the Disabled, free of tax and based on continuity of care.

   One of the areas where in-depth work has been carried out relates to the third age. Research is under way with the elderly as the primary subject in order to evaluate their characteristics and bio-social factors, including needs and requirements, with a view to establishing future development policies and strategies.

7. Concerning the cultural environment, we can say that in this sphere Cuban women make their presence felt as creators and promoters of cultural activities, or as public participants in the daily cultural life of the country.

   Both children, girls and adult women, including elderly women, form part of the movement of artists devoted to dance, music, the plastic arts, cinema, theatre, etc.

In the cultural sector, the female labour force is 49.8 per cent of the total, but here it is not only their presence, but the quality of their presence, which is important.

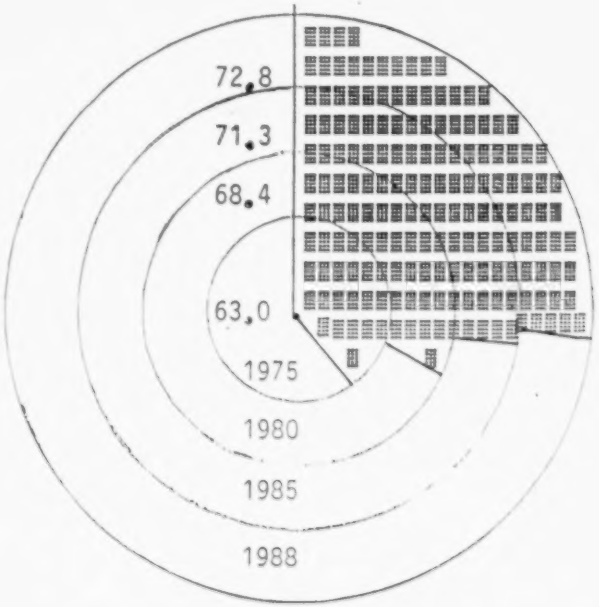
Women directors in cultural activity represent 48 per cent of the total; they administer such prestigious institutions as the Cuban Institute of Music, the National Museum of Fine Arts, the José Martí National Library, the National Council for the Performing Arts, the National Theatre and the Havana Grand Theatre, as well as famous artistic companies, including the Cuban National Ballet, the National Folklore Company and the Cuban National Choir.

Women make important contributions to literature, poetry, essay and short story writing, and reporting. Also in the performing and dancing arts, plastic arts, music and cinema.

In recognition of services performed, Cuban artists and intellectuals have been awarded the Decoration for National Culture, the Alejo Carpentier Medal and the Félix Varela Order.

V. ANNEXES

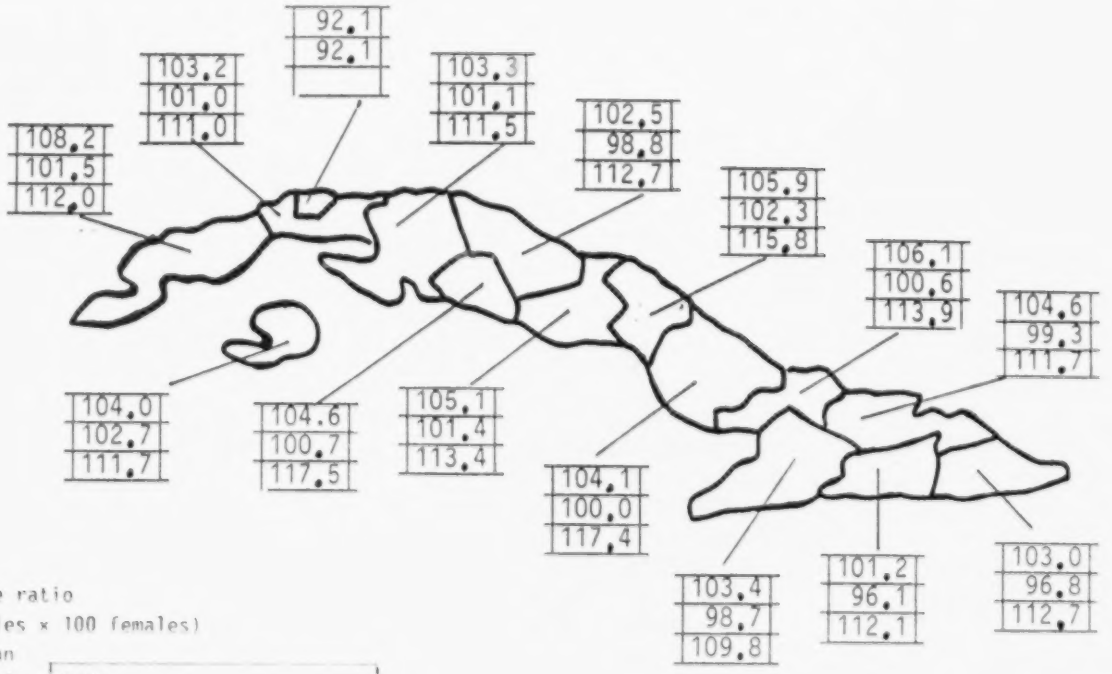
POPULATION BY ZONE OF RESIDENCE



% urban % rural

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbooks, 1975-1988. CEEC.

URBAN AND RURAL MALE RATIO

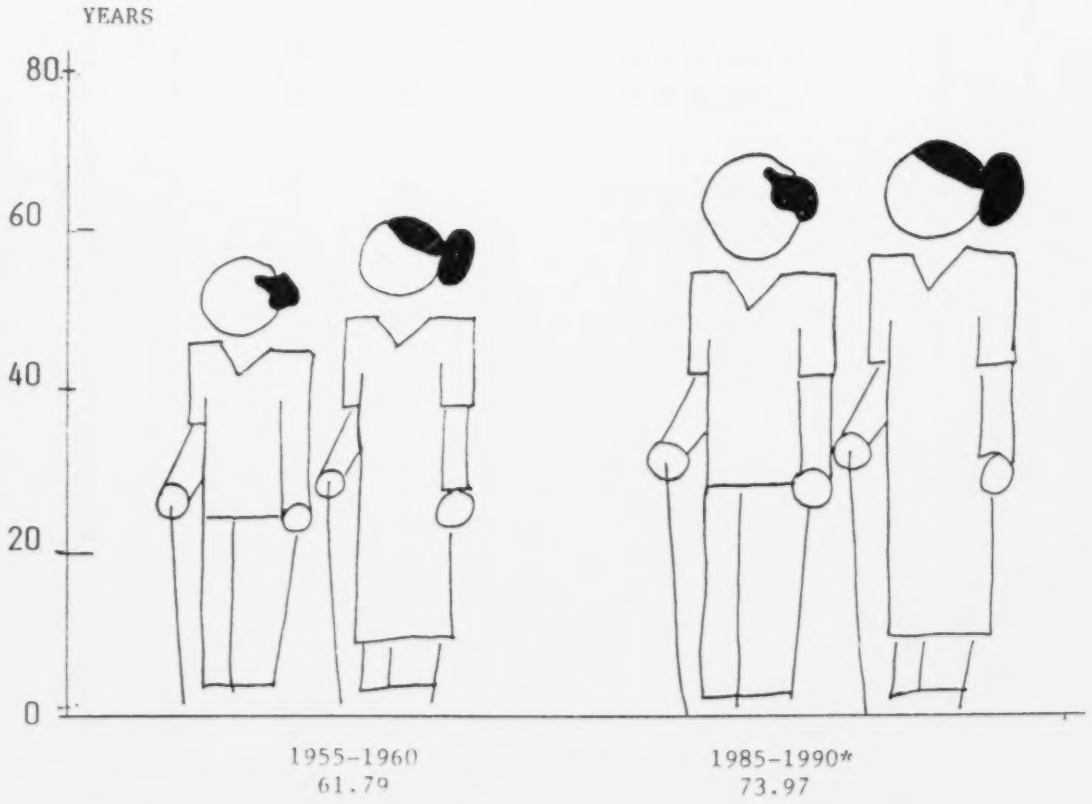


Male ratio
(males x 100 females)
Urban
Rural

CUBA 1988	Males x 100 females
Both zones	101.4
Urban	97.5
Rural	112.6

Source: Studies and data on the Cuban population: Publication No. 18. CEE.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH



Source: Annual Report 1988, MINSAP (Ministry of Health)

TABLE 28

FERTILITY RATES

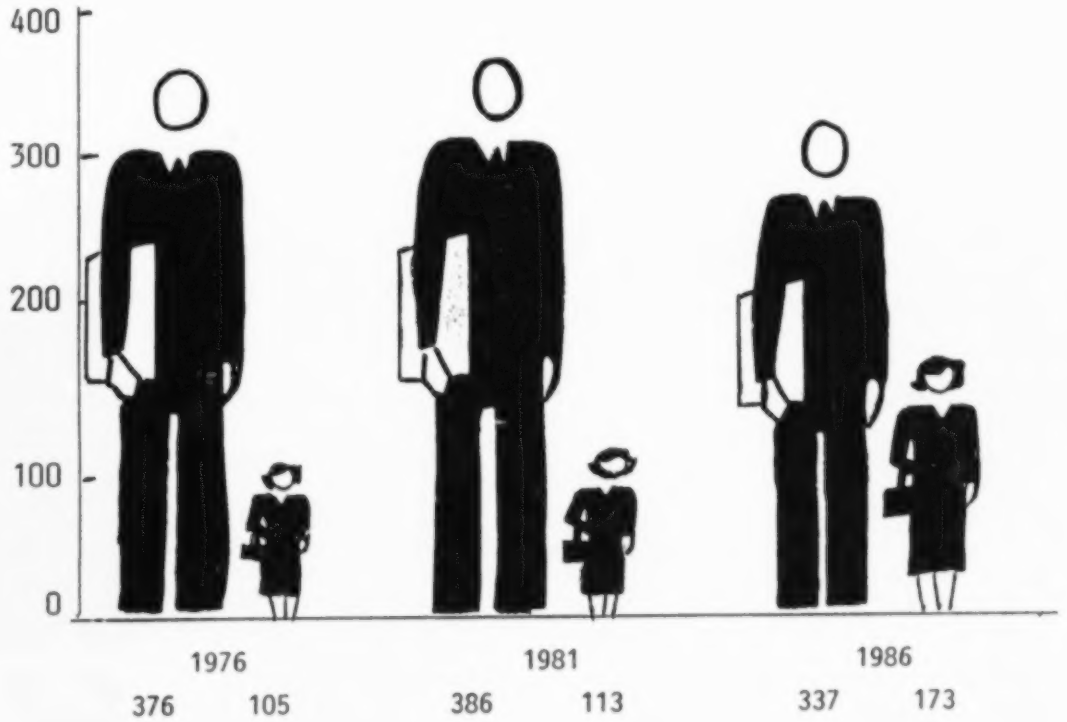
Categories	1953*	1975	1980	1985	1988**
Fertility rate by age group (per 1,000 women)					
15-19	58.9	127.3	86.3	92.9	85.8
20-24	205.6	179.6	116.8	126.8	122.7
25-29	203.6	118.6	70.9	95.7	92.5
30-34	138.9	68.8	37.4	46.5	52.5
35-39	79.1	37.4	16.2	18.5	19.1
40-44	28.7	13.5	4.6	3.9	2.6
45-49	4.2	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.1
Overall fertility rate (per 1,000 women of child-bearing age)					
15-45	112.7	90.9	56.3	66.1	64.1
Global fertility rate (children per woman)	3.60	2.74	1.67	1.93	1.88
Gross reproductive rate (daughters per woman)	1.76	1.3	0.81	0.94	0.92

Source: Cuba Demographic Yearbooks 1986-lba, 1986-1988. State Committee for Statistics. For 1975-1980 (p. 65) of the .... Yearbook.

* Yearbook not published. Figures supplied by the agency.

** Fertility trends for women in the period 1959-1984.

DEPUTIES TO THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY



Source: Electoral Commission, 1989.

WOMEN DIRECTORS IN CENTRAL STATE DEPARTMENTS

	1982 %	1985 %	1987 %
Women ministers and women presidents	3.1	2.9	4.8
Women deputy ministers and women vice-presidents	5.1	5.0	9.4
Women directors	12.2	13.9	12.6
Women heads of department	19.3	22.5	25.0

Source: Report of the Committee of the Council of Ministers, 1982 and 1985. National Census of Government Administrative Personnel, 1987. CEE.

COMPOSITION OF FMC MEMBERSHIP,
BY AGE

1989

Years	Number	Percentage
14-19	513 043	15.1
20-29	843 719	25.0
30-39	705 573	20.8
40-49	593 662	17.5
50-64	484 890	14.3
65 and over	248 682	7.3

Source: Organization Section, National Directorate for the FMC, 1989.

WORKERS' CENTRAL UNION OF CUBA (CTC)

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

Year	Percentage total	Percentage women
1975	92.4	95.4
1980	96.9	98.7
1985	99.4	99.7
1989*	98.1	98.9

Source: CTC, 1989.

* June 1989.

TRADE UNION OFFICIALS

	Total	Women	Percentage
Offices	17 942	8 108	45.2
Union branches	314 875	157 119	49.9

Source: CTC Report, June 1989.

PROFESSIONAL TRADE UNION OFFICIALS

CTC AND UNIONS, JUNE 1989

	Total	Women	Percentage
National	218	50	22.9
Provincial	1 256	369	29.4
Municipal	1 928	666	34.5
Union offices	952	144	15.1
TOTAL	4 354	1 229	28.2

Source: CTC, 1989.

TABLE 5

TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE,
BY SEX AND AGE GROUP

(Per cent)

AGE GROUPS	1980 Total	1980 Men	1980 Women	1985 Total	1985 Men	1985 Women	1988 Total	1988 Men	1988 Women
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 17 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
17-24 years	14.2	12.3	18.3	16.8	15.8	18.4	15.6	15.3	16.2
25-34 years	32.3	30.4	36.3	30.0	28.2	33.0	31.2	29.3	34.3
35-44 years	27.4	27.3	27.5	27.4	27.0	28.1	27.7	26.9	28.9
45-54 years	16.9	18.4	13.9	17.4	18.5	15.6	18.0	19.0	16.2
55-64 years	7.9	9.9	3.7	7.4	9.2	4.3	6.7	8.4	3.9
65 and over	1.3	1.7	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.3

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. State Committee for Statistics (p. 199). Table designed and calculated by the experts.

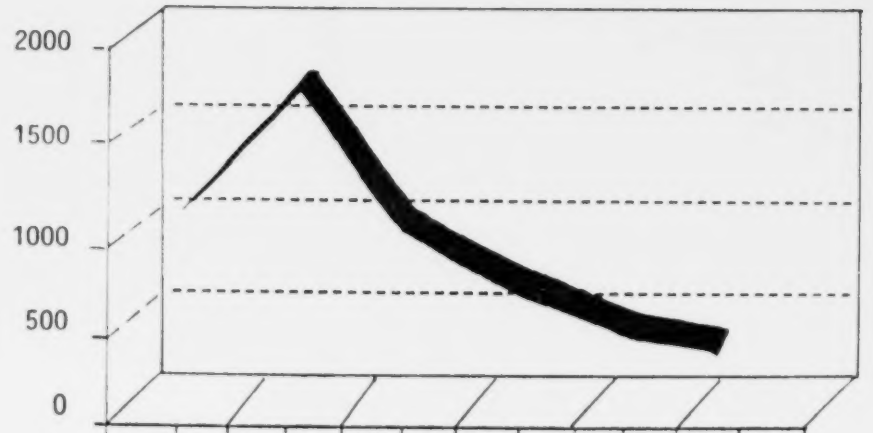
TABLE 2

TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, BY SEX
(Absolute figures and percentages)

Sex	1975	1980	1985	1988
		Absolute (thousands)		
Total	2 442.6	2 599.0	3 173.3	3 455.6
Men	1 773.6	1 755.9	1 983.8	1 233.6
Women	669.0	843.1	1 189.5	1 322.0
		Percentage by sex		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men	72.6	67.6	62.5	61.7
Women	27.4	32.4	37.5	38.3

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. State Committee for Statistics (p. 205). Table and calculations by the experts.

INHABITANTS PER DOCTOR



	1958	1962	1975	1980	1985	1988
Inhab. X Doc.	1076	1832	997	638	441	333

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. CEE.

MATERNAL MORTALITY
(Per 1,000 live births)

Causes	1975	1980	1985	1988
Abortion	11.9	15.3	2.2	8.0
Puerperal complications	11.9	11.7	6.0	6.4
Toxaemia in pregnancy and puerperal period	11.4	3.6	6.0	3.7
Haemorrhage during pregnancy and delivery	6.2	5.8	1.6	1.6
Other complications in pregnancy, delivery and puerperal period	27.0	16.1	14.8	6.4
Total	68.4	52.6	30.8	26.1

Source: Annual Report 1988 and Department of Statistics, MINSAP.

TABLE 44

INTRA-UTERINE CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICES (IUD), BY NUMBERS FITTED AND RATES, BY YEAR

Year	Post-natal	Post-abortion	Consultation	Total	Rate* for IUDs fitted
1985	75 609	101 399	94 608	271 685	87.0
1989	77 237	111 757	135 649	324 643	100.5

Source: Report submitted by the National Directorate for Statistics, Ministry of Health, 1985 and 1989.

* Rate per 1,000 women aged 12-49.

TABLE 45

FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMMES AND CENTRES

A programme at national level which comprises:

16 provincial referral centres
169 municipal referral centres
462 rural clinics and hospitals
40 secondary family planning referral centres
8,965 family doctors provide family planning services

Source: Report submitted by the State Committee for Statistics, February 1991.

TABLE 24

MEDICAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

Number of Maternity Homes and Admissions by year

Years	Number of homes	Number of admissions
1975	48	24 629
1980	74	26 140
1985	109	36 871
1988	143	43 572

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. State Committee for Statistics, (pp. 565-575-576)

WOMEN EXAMINED UNDER THE PROGRAMME FOR EARLY DETECTION OF CERVICAL-UTERINE CANCER

Year	Number	Rate	Year	Number	Rate
1970	176 307	78.5	1985	550 951	176.2
1975	432 093	172.8	1987	710 255	218.3
1980	426 186	156.4	1989	907 921	261.0

Rate per 1,000 women aged 20 years or over.

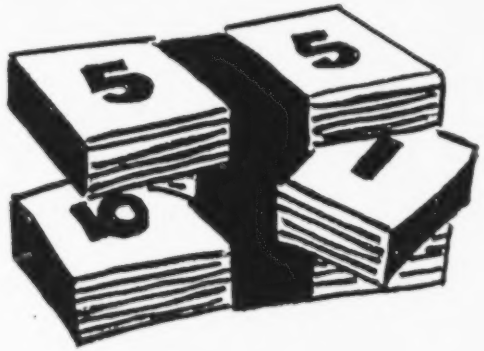
SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENDITURE

(Millions of pesos)

	1975	1980	1985	1988
Total	585.4	709.3	965.1	1 217.5
Social security benefits	560.7	687.1	931.1	1 177.1
Pensions: old-age, total disability, death	448.2	541.5	764.1	994.3
Sickness, accident and maternity allowances	71.2	97.6	149.2	163.0
Other benefits*	41.3	48.0	17.8	19.8
Social welfare benefits	24.7	22.2	34.0	40.4

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. CEE.

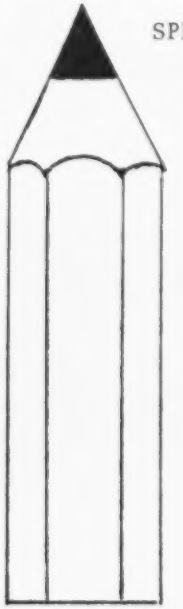
* As a result of legislation, annuities for 1985 and 1986 have been progressively absorbed into pensions for old-age, total disability and death.



OLD-AGE AND TOTAL DISABILITY BENEFITS

Years	Both sexes	Percentage of women	Average benefit for women (pesos)
1985	46 276	26.6	72.39
1986	48 901	29.1	74.91
1987	61 005	28.7	85.30
1988	52 440	30.6	85.83
October 1989	40 435	33.7	86.19

Source: Department of Social Security and Welfare. 30 November 1989. CETSS.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

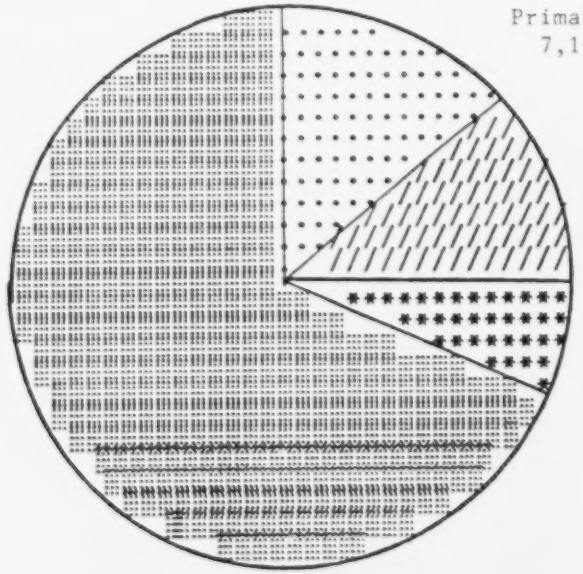
	1959*	1988
Schools	14	466
Enrolment	134	52 900
Teachers	20	14 900

Source: Granma Magazine, 30 October 1989.

* Approximate figures.

HOUSEWIVES STUDYING

ACADEMIC YEAR 1989-90



Source: State Committee for Statistics, November 1989, Model 1108-01.

TABLE 15

NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

School year 1989-1990

Total number of schools	499
Mentally retarded	298
Deaf or hard of hearing	26
Blind or defective vision	6
Strabismus or amblyopia	13
Behavioural problems	91
Speech problems	5
Retarded physical development	36

Source: Data supplied by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Education, March 1990. Continuous statistical sources.